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"THAT THEY MAY BE ONE"

In Behalf of

THE ORGANIC UNION OF AMERICAN METHODISM

BY

CLAUDIUS B. SPENCER



THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN

NEW YORK CINCINNATI

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CLAUDIUS B. SPENCER

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INTRODUCTION

THE hour has passed when the branches of the Methodist family in America (if they really desire organic union) will confine themselves to expressions of fraternal feeling merely or a desire for unification. The history of the present quadrennium makes such a display, if the deliverance confines itself to that, quite belated if not tiresome, because there is now before the Methodism of this country a concrete plan for achieving organic union between at least two of its branches, and those, in numbers, property, and influence, preeminent. Discussion may, indeed, take the form of an argument for organic union and an appeal for its consummation, but all that goes only part way in what is demanded from henceforth of such as take in hand any real or satisfying contribution to the subject. Such expressions were in place when the Cape May Commission met in 1876; more

or less unhappily they were in place for several subsequent decades. But forty years have passed since 1876. A new generation, ignorant, or at least innocent, of the past and its scars, is on the scene; and this new generation demands not only an argument against the waste, the sectionalism, that builds altar against altar, or in any way indulges in unbrotherly rivalry and competition; the new generation demands also a way out.

Already in foreign lands the dream of cooperation is realized. The issue is clear-cut whether Methodism cannot exhibit in this land, the home and motherland of these foreign achievements, a unification even more real, concrete, compact, and final.

Such an endeavor in this country is now, as we have seen, no longer optional. These pages trace the story of a practical, deliberate, and, in a sense, official, endeavor to provide a Plan for the union of Methodism; which Plan has been adopted by one of the high contracting parties and now is transmitted to another of the contracting parties for definite action. The

Methodist Episcopal Church must return to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, a definitive answer to this Plan; an answer no longer composed of aspirations and sentiments merely, but composed of a Plan that can be taken hold of and inspected, a Plan no less concrete and substantial, as to the structure of reorganization, than that which is now placed in our hands.

This little treatise, if, indeed, it is more than a tract, gives itself definitely to an inspection of the Plan sent to us by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, its content and implications: then it suggests certain modifications necessary to make the Plan practicable and unanimous.

Were it proper to do so, I should count it a high pleasure to dedicate this little book individually to the members of the Joint Commission on Federation which drafted the Plan, so many of whom are personal friends, and for all of whom I have high esteem.

May I be permitted to add that I will welcome from any source opinions and discussions of the positions taken in this

book; they will be given due attention; and it is within the compass of possibility that, in essence at least, these opinions and discussions will be placed under the eye of the Churches concerned. Particularly welcome will be such observations as point out defects either in the analysis of the proposed Plan and its implications, or in the amended Plan which is herein submitted to the entire Methodism of this land.

C. B. S.

July 31, 1915.

CHAPTER I

"THAT THEY MAY BE ONE"

I

FIRST fraternity, then federation; first unity, then union. Not in a moment, not forced, rather a growth from seed to harvest. Thus is illustrated that orderly and normal evolution which holds good in the psychical as well as physical world—"first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

The desire is not new to see the prayer of the Saviour fulfilled as regards the members of the Methodist family in this hemisphere: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." As early as April, 1869, while the shadows of the Civil War still hung upon the nation, the Board of Bishops of the

Methodist Episcopal Church appointed the two senior bishops, Morris and Janes, to bear a fraternal communication to the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at their meeting in Saint Louis in the ensuing month of May. It must have been with a feeling of the most solemn joy that each of these men received his commission. Morris was Virginia born; he was bishop when the Church was bisected in 1844; he alone of the bishops then in office was still alive; as bishop he had taken the vote by which several Annual Conferences had given their adherence to the Church South; he had been bishop through the awful years from 1844 till 1865; and now, bent beneath the weight of well-nigh four score years, and within a span of his release from this life, he was commissioned to bear the olive branch to the men he had known when the Church was one. Janes, though New England born, was, as we still hear it said by them, the gift of the South to the Methodist Episcopal Church, since, on the eve of the adjournment of the fateful General Conference which

bisected the Church, it was their vote that placed him in the episcopacy. He was but thirty-seven then, and now, at sixty-two, having made full proof of his episcopal ministry, he would meet representatives of a body he had reason to regard with feelings deeper than mere esteem. As it was doubtful if the senior bishop could fulfill his commission, Bishop Simpson was added to the deputation; the gratification such an errand would bring to him would be known of all.

May 8, 1869, at ten o'clock, Bishops Janes and Simpson, having been announced, were introduced to the College of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Saint Louis. Several communications of an official nature were read. The first declared:

"*Reverend and Dear Brethren:* At a meeting of the Board of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in Erie, Pennsylvania, in June, 1865, we made and published the following declaration:

" 'That the great cause which led to the separation from us of both the Wesleyan

Methodists of this country and of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has passed away, and we trust the day is not far distant when there shall be but one organization, which shall embrace the whole Methodist family of the United States.'

"This declaration was made in good faith, and shows what were then our sentiments and feelings, and was deemed by us as the utmost we were authorized to say or do on the subject at that time. . . .

"Believing as we do that, if they were one in both spirit and organization, much more could be accomplished for the interests of humanity and for the glory of God, we are desirous of doing all we consistently can to promote a reunion on terms alike honorable to both Churches, and in the spirit of our divine Lord.

"We, therefore, ask your attention to the Commission above referred to, and we express to you the opinion that should your approaching General Conference see proper to appoint a similar Commission, they will be promptly met by our Commission, who, we doubt not, will be

happy to treat with them, and to report the result to our next General Conference."

After a few remarks by Bishops Janes and Simpson, and a brief reply by Bishop Paine, Bishop Janes proposed prayer. This was favorably responded to by Bishop Paine, who invited Bishops Wightman and Janes to lead in such devotions, after which the interview closed.

The following response to the above was received by Bishop Morris, May 14:

"TO THE BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

"*Reverend and Dear Brethren:* It has afforded us pleasure to receive in person your respected colleagues, Bishops Janes and Simpson, deputed by you to confer with us, and we cannot forbear to express our regret that one of the delegation appointed by you to us—the venerable Bishop Morris—was not able to be present. We desired to see him again face to face, to enjoy his society, and to renew to him the assurances of our affection and

regard. Our own senior superintendent, Bishop Andrew, though in the city, was hindered by the feebleness and infirmities incident to age from being present at the reception of your colleagues and enjoying with us the interview.

"Your communication, together with that laid before us by your Commission, has been considered, and we entirely agree in your estimate of the responsibility in the premises resting on the chief pastors of the separated bodies of Methodism.

"We would approach, dear brethren, the matter of your communication with the utmost candor and love, and so meet the advanced steps on your part that nothing shall be wanting on ours to bring about a better state of things, becoming and beneficial to us both. We deplore the unfortunate controversies and tempers that have prevailed, and still prevail, and our earnest desire and prayer to God is, that they may give place, and that speedily, to peace. In evidence of this we are ready not only to respond to, but to go further than your communication, and from our point of view to suggest what

may help to remove the difficulties and obstacles that are in the way."

This "response" then continued:

"Permit us, then to say, in regard to 'reunion,' that, in our opinion, there is another subject to be considered before that can be entertained, and necessarily in order to it—we mean the establishment of fraternal feelings and relations between the two Churches. They must be one in spirit before they can be one in organization. Concord must be achieved before any real union. Heart divisions must be cured before corporate divisions can be healed."

The response noted the fact that the Church South had years before sent the beloved Lovick Pierce to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church on a message of "fraternal relations and intercourse"—a mission which the heat of the times rendered abortive, so it was not received. In the nature of the case it would thereafter be necessary that the Methodist Episcopal Church should take the initiative if fraternity were to become possible.

In 1870 Bishop Janes and Dr. William L. Harris (afterward bishop) were appointed a deputation to pay a fraternal visit to the General Conference of the Methodist Church, South, in Memphis, Tennessee. The deputation being invited to address the Conference, Bishop Janes having noted that he and his colleague did "not understand that power was delegated to the deputation to negotiate, or that it was appointed to take any definite action in any matter," said: "I suppose that it was intended that the deputation should ascertain what was the state of public sentiment [among members of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South], to learn what embarrassments existed to prevent a union, and suggest in what manner a union might be effected."

He continued: "I do not think any of us anticipate that a perfect organic union can be effected at once. It cannot be done without prayer and without magnanimity and concession on both sides. . . . But I do believe that the prayer of Christ will be heard and that the time will come when

his people will be one. Anything to hasten that end should be done." He concluded: "I would do great injustice to my own feelings did I not express the fact that it affords me great pleasure to look upon the countenances of so many whom I knew many years ago."

From that day to this, veering somewhat as winds might blow, both of the Churches have been steadily coming nearer together. It is beyond the scope of this little treatise to trace the course they have sailed; suffice it to say that today the Churches seem within sight of the common haven.

II

In the autumn of 1910 the Commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church who were members of the Joint Commission on Federation invited the other members of the Joint Commission from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and from the Methodist Protestant Church to meet them in the city of Baltimore, for the purpose of considering defi-

nitely the matter of the organic union of American Methodism. The members of the Joint Commission issuing the call were Bishop Earl Cranston, Bishop John M. Walden, and Bishop Luther B. Wilson; the Rev. John Franklin Goucher, LL.D., the Rev. W. W. Evans, D.D., and President G. A. Reeder, D.D., and Messrs. Robert T. Miller, LL.D., Hanford Crawford, Esq. (whose father, M. D'C. Crawford, D.D., LL.D., had been chairman of the Methodist Episcopal Section of the Cape May Federation of 1876), and Hon. John Alanson Patten, LL.D.

The meeting was held in Baltimore, November 30-December 2, 1910. A communication from the Commissioners calling the meeting was read by Bishop Cranston, which, after reviewing at length the weighty reasons which had moved them to call this meeting, said, "We hereby tender a brotherly invitation to the Commissioners of the respective Churches to consider with us at this time the desirability and practicability of organic union."

Much time was spent in prayer. Nor can there be any question of the depth of

feeling and of concord that pervaded every session of the meeting.

After declaring, "We are mutually agreed that the Churches represented by us are equally apostolic in faith and purpose and have a common origin (the Methodist Episcopal Church organized 1784), that they are joint heirs of the traditions and standards of the fathers," and "that our fathers settled the issues of the past conscientiously for themselves respectively and separated regretfully," the Commission appointed a Joint Committee of Nine, three from each Commission, to present, if found practicable, a plan which should provide "for such unification through reorganization of the Methodist Churches concerned, as shall insure unity of purpose, administration, evangelistic effort, and all other functions for which our Methodism has stood from the beginning."

The Committee of Nine met in Cincinnati in January, 1911, and, by the end of three days given to a prayerful study of the subject, had worked out "A Plan of Unification Through Reorganization."

The Joint Commission met in Chattanooga May 10-12, 1911, to hear and consider the report of a Committee of Nine. The report was adopted without a substantial alteration, except that by Bishop Cranston, providing for the uniting of all the colored Methodists into one of the "Quadrennial Conferences."

The General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church in May, 1912, approved the work of its Commission in agreeing to the tentative Plan of Unification of the Methodist Bodies in the United States by reorganization, but took no definite action on the suggestions looking to reorganization. The report to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in its meeting in 1914, summarizes the record whereby we learn that the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church received the report of their Commissioners, but because of the resolution which was adopted by the Commission to the effect "that at the close of our deliberations we emphasize the statement that the suggestions here outlined are only tentative, that in

no sense are these suggestions a plan, but merely the result of our explorations in search of a basis of union," they seemed to have felt that they were not at liberty to take any action on the tentative plan of unification which the Joint Commission had adopted; but the General Conference declared, "We heartily approve the action of our Commission on Federation in proposing the question of organic union to the Commissioners in joint session at Baltimore, believing that the membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church would welcome a corporate reunion of the Methodisms of America." A Commission on Federation was appointed "with full power and authority to continue negotiations and to meet with similar Commissions from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Methodist Protestant Church, and any and all other duly appointed Commissions from other Churches and branches of Methodism, or with each separately, concerning the commendable purposes of advancing organic union, or closer federation, said Commission to report to the next General

Conference." The Commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at the meeting in Washington, D. C., April 8, 1913, declared, "We cannot under the circumstances interpret the action of the General Conference as unfavorable either to the method followed by the Joint Commission or to any of the results obtained."

The General Conference of the Church South met in 1914, in Oklahoma City. On the fourteenth day, Bishop E. E. Hoss in the chair, Report No. Eight, of the Committee on Church Relations, was taken up as the order of the day. After reciting briefly the incidents which we have summarized, the report gave the plan for organic union as unanimously formulated by the Joint Commission. But one speech was made, by Dr. F. M. Thomas, the fraternal messenger from the Church South to our General Conference at Minneapolis, and a member of the Joint Commission on Federation. He said: "We are approaching an age of unity; nations may resist, churches may resist; but the tide will be too strong for them. Two of the spirits which signed

this document are looking down from the other world. A great array of heroes who have gone to their reward are looking down upon us to-day." He quoted from the venerable Bishop Alpheus W. Wilson: "Great as have been the achievements of the twentieth century, the greatest achievement of modern times will be the unification of Methodism." Also he quoted from James M. Buckley: "To see Methodism in this great nation substantially united would be worth living for and sacrificing for through long years." Dr. Thomas then moved that the Chair be invited to make remarks upon this subject.

The chairman, Bishop Hoss, arose and with deep feeling gave a vivid interpretation of the significance of the hour. He then called for the General Conference to vote. It was a most impressive moment. The Chair said, "If you will adopt this report, please rise and stand until you are counted."

The entire body arose.

Bishop Hoss: "I do not wish to have any mistake about this. If there is any-

body here that is opposed to it, I want him to rise and stand until he is counted."

There was a pause and silence.

Bishop Hoss: "It gives me very great pleasure to say to our brethren that there is no dissenting vote."

The Plan was adopted. The Plan is now squarely before the Methodist Episcopal Church for definitive action.

CHAPTER II

THE PLAN

I

The Joint Commission meeting May 10, 1911, in Chattanooga, adopted the following

PLAN OF REORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN METHODISM

1. We suggest, as a plan of reorganization, the merging of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, into one Church, to be known as the Methodist Episcopal Church in America or the Methodist Church of America.

2. We suggest that this Church shall have throughout common Articles of Faith, common conditions of membership, a common hymnal, a common catechism, and a common ritual.

3. We suggest that the governing power of the reorganized Church shall be vested in one General Conference and three or four Quadrennial Conferences, both General and Quadrennial Conferences to exercise their powers under constitutional provisions and restrictions, the General Conference to have full legislative power over all matters distinctly connectional, and the Quadrennial Conferences to have full legislative power over distinct-

ively local affairs. We suggest that the colored membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and such organizations of colored Methodists as may enter into agreement with them, may be constituted and reorganized as one of the Quadrennial or Jurisdictional Conferences of the proposed reorganization.

4. We suggest that the General Conference shall consist of two houses, each house to be composed of equal numbers of ministerial and lay delegates. The delegates in the first house shall be apportioned equally among the Quadrennial Conferences and elected under equitable rules to be provided therefor. The ministerial delegates in the second house shall be elected by the ministerial members in the Annual Conferences, and the lay delegates by the laity within the Annual Conferences, under equitable rules to be provided therefor. Each Annual Conference shall have at least one ministerial and one lay delegate. The larger Conferences shall have one additional ministerial and one additional lay delegate for every —— ministerial members of the Conference; also an additional ministerial and lay delegate where there is an excess of two thirds of the fixed rate of representation. All legislation of the General Conference shall require the concurrent action of the two houses.

5. We suggest that the Quadrennial Conferences shall be composed of an equal number of ministerial and lay delegates, to be chosen by the Annual Conferences within their several jurisdictions, according to an equitable plan to be provided for.

6. We suggest that the Quadrennial Conferences shall fix the boundaries of the Annual Con-

ferences within their respective jurisdictions, and that the Annual Conferences shall be composed of all traveling preachers in full connection therewith and one lay representative from each pastoral charge.

7. We suggest that the Quadrennial Conference shall name the bishops from their several jurisdictions, the same to be confirmed by the first house of the General Conference.

8. We suggest that neither the General Conference nor any of the Quadrennial Conferences be invested with final authority to interpret the constitutionality of its own actions.

II

The Committee on Church Relations, in its report to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, made this recommendation:

1. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, considers the plan outlined in the suggestions that were adopted by the Joint Commission representing the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and reported to the General Conferences of their respective Churches as tentative, but nevertheless as containing the basic principles of a genuine unification of the Methodist bodies in the United States, and especially of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, by the method of reorganization.

2. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, re-

gards the unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, by the method of reorganization as feasible and desirable, and hereby declares itself in favor of the unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in accordance with this general plan of reorganization, and in favor of the unification of all or any Methodist bodies who accept this proposed plan after it has been accepted by the Methodist Episcopal Church. However, we recommend that the colored membership of the various Methodist bodies be formed into an independent organization holding fraternal relations with the reorganized and united Church.

3. The representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in the Federal Council of Methodism are hereby instructed and empowered to act as Commissioners with like Commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or with Commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and other Methodist bodies in the United States in elaborating and perfecting the tentative plan that has been proposed, and in carrying forward such negotiations as have for their purpose, and may result in, the consummation of the proposed unification in accordance with the basic principles enunciated in the suggestions which were adopted by the Joint Commission and reported to the General Conferences. Should the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1916 declare itself in favor of unification through the proposed plan of reorganization and should it appoint a Commission on Unification separate from the Federal Council of Methodism, the

representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, are hereby instructed and empowered to appoint a similar Commission that shall serve until the meeting of the next General Conference. The representatives of this Church in the Federal Council of Methodism or such Commission on Unification as may be appointed shall report to the next General Conference the full details of the plan of unification which may be agreed upon by the Federal Council of Methodism or the Joint Commission on Unification for its consideration and final determination. The representatives of this Church are hereby instructed to say to the Joint Commission on Unification that the name preferred for the reorganization and united Church is the Methodist Church in America.

It is this latter Plan that is before the Methodist Episcopal Church for prayerful and definite action.

CHAPTER III

THE FREEDOM AND NECESSITY OF DISCUSSION

I

It is of the highest importance that at this point the question be settled as to whether it is proper to discuss this Plan in a book like this. Particularly is it seemly to ask the question, for one thing because of the quite thrilling manner in which the Plan was adopted by the General Conference of our great sister communion. Some among us doubt the propriety of any discussion. Rather, the document should be referred to the General Conference of 1916, and by it to a committee or commission to carefully work out before it becomes a matter of public scrutiny. This doubt will be removed if attention is given to a few considerations as to the binding character of

the proposed Plan. In the first place, we must inquire whether the members of the Joint Commission, though voting unanimously in favor, are committed to it, so that it must not only have their official support as it comes to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and as it now comes to us.

Bishop Cranston has settled this point. In an article written for the Central Christian Advocate and other Church papers, among other things he says:

The Commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Protestant Methodist Church met in joint session at Chattanooga, May 10-12, 1911, to receive the report of a subcommittee of nine, which had been appointed at Baltimore in early December, 1910. This subcommittee had been created to consider the whole subject of union, and to report at a subsequent meeting of the Joint Commission whether a plan of union can be devised, and if so to suggest such a plan.

Before the report was taken up **the following preliminary statement signed by Bishop Hoss, Dr. T. H. Lewis, and myself, was offered, and adopted by the Joint Commission—the specific purpose of this preliminary action is at once apparent:**

"Deeming it of the utmost importance that no misconception of the significance to be attached to the conclusions that may be reached through

the discussion of the report now before us shall be entertained by our people or by the public, and regarding it as scarcely less important to the objects of our deliberations that every commissioner be entirely free in the discussion of the points of said report, we propose the following record as preliminary to the consideration of the same:

"1. This report, which deals only in outline with but a part of the principal questions involved in the matter of reunion of our Churches, is to be regarded simply as *illustrative of the present status of our deliberations*—which have been steadily directed to the one end of *discovering first what is practicable, not what might be regarded as ideal.*

"2. This report being the first ever formulated for its purpose, and dealing with conditions complicated and delicate, is to be taken as *suggestive of possible lines of procedure,* and our conclusions thereon as the judgment of the Joint Commission concerning the question, 'What is at the present juncture *apparently practicable* as a basis of reunion or reorganization?' "

To save repetition I call attention to the words italicized (by this writer) as containing the *intention* of all who shared in the action that ensued. Then, again, at *the conclusion* of the discussion thus introduced, the following declaration (signed by Denny, Hoss, Cranston, Cooke, and Waterhouse) was adopted:

After reiterating in substance the above preliminary statement, these words followed (referring to the "suggestions," which had been agreed upon, and which are now spoken of as "the plan," etc.): "That we emphasize the statement that the sugges-

tions here outlined are only tentative; that in no sense are these suggestions a plan, but merely the result of our exploration in search of a basis of union. It has not been possible to think through even the questions that have come before us. Other questions not yet touched will need to be weighed, analyzed, and carefully stated."

Finally, if any "finally" be needed after the above, I call attention to the last relevant clause in the address authorized by the Joint Commission to be sent out "To the Methodists of the United States" concerning the results thus far attained. These are the words: "We wish it to be distinctly understood that what we have done is not and does not pretend to be of the nature of a definite plan of union, but it is cast in the form of a series of suggestions to the General Conferences such as may be helpful to them in reaching final conclusions."

II

As to the nature of the case, whether the Plan should be looked upon as final, and therefore beyond the courtesy and pertinency of discussion, the Church South has herself officially spoken. In his remarks before the General Conference at Oklahoma City and just previous to putting to vote the adoption of this proposed Plan, Bishop Hoss declared: "This is not final; nobody dreams it is

final; no one man is wise enough to frame a final plan of union of all Methodism. We should go on and after a time Almighty God will put his hand in and this thing will come to pass."

The bishops of the Church South in their Episcopal Address to the General Conference at Oklahoma City, declared, "It is for you to determine, therefore, whether you will indorse what your Commissioners have done, or modify it, or ignore it, or completely reject it."

The language of the report itself reads: "The Joint Commissions representing the three Churches appointed a Joint Committee of nine, three from each Commission, to bring to the Joint Commissions, if found practicable, a Plan for submission to the General Conferences and people of the respective Churches."

In view of this provision, it is not an impertinence to offer pages similar to these; it seems, rather, a duty. One of the greatest intellects the Methodist Episcopal Church has had, now in the other world, wrote this writer shortly before his death: "Now that the General Conference

of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has put the proposition squarely up to us, we shall have to look the matter squarely in the face and to make some answer. . . . Discuss it, for meet it we must. Let us go at it deliberately and in such spirit as will commend us to the Christian world."

On a matter of such far-reaching consequences, therefore, this little book is a response to a sense of duty.

CHAPTER IV

UNION BY REORGANIZATION

I

In his speech in response to the written statement to the members of the Joint Commission on Federation, read by Bishop Cranston in behalf of the Commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Bishop Hoss enunciated this doctrine: "If a real, vital, and permanent union is to be effected, each separate Church must be ready to make some concessions, and this too not on trifling points but on matters of real importance. There must be no blinking of this fact and no policy of shiftiness or maneuvering for advantage. Those who are most eager for union ought to be the first to say how far they are willing to go to obtain it. The mere intimation that either one of the

Churches should absorb the other, retaining meanwhile all of its own prime peculiarities, would be an impertinence. If organic union ever becomes a reality, it will consist not in the mere enlargement of any existing Church, but in *the creation of a new Church.*" He added: "The Southern Methodists do not wish to absorb any body, and they are not going to be absorbed. Many of us, at any rate, before submitting to that will camp out under God's kindly stars."

The Plan proposed interprets exactly this deliverance by Bishop Hoss; we are presented with a plan for achieving organic union by reorganizing existing denominations, or, as Bishop Hoss phrases it, it is a plan for "the creation of *a new* Church." Every Methodist, North and South, must, therefore, be prepared to view the Church to which he is attached shattered at many points, that out of the debris may be constructed the new Church. Nothing short of that blunt, final understanding of the situation will enable any person to understand the Plan now in store for American Methodism.

II

What, then, is the proposed Plan officially submitted by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South? It may be summarized as follows:

It proposes:

1. A division of the United States into Quadrennial Conferences which shall, under constitutional guarantees and restrictions, possess full and sole jurisdiction over all possible questions distinctive to their area.

2. The creation of a General Conference to consist of two houses, a first and a second house, the members of the first house to be chosen in equal numbers by the respective Quadrennial Conferences and composed of equal numbers of ministers and laymen; the second house to be chosen by the Annual Conferences and the Lay Electoral Conferences, according to membership, and after the manner the General Conferences are chosen at the present time. This General Conference shall have jurisdiction only on such matters as are distinctly connectional.

3. The colored members of the present denominations shall be "formed into an independent organization holding fraternal relations with the reorganized Church."

4. Laymen shall be members of the Annual Conferences.

5. The Sectional Quadrennial Conferences shall name their own bishops.

6. "Neither the General nor any of the Quadrennial Conferences shall be invested with final authority to interpret the constitutionality of its own actions."

7. The name of the Church is changed: "The representatives of this Church (the Church South) are hereby instructed to say to the Joint Commission on Unification that the name proposed for the united Church is the Methodist Church in America."

III

We may point out in this place the last of these seven propositions. It discloses the fact that the first thing to go down, so far as the Methodist Episcopal

Church is concerned in this reorganization, is its name. This is the name chosen for the Methodist movement in this hemisphere, the banner under which Asbury and McKendree led the hosts up and down the Atlantic coast, and over the mountain ranges into the West, the banner under which Soule and Capers and McTyeire and Wilson, as well as Ames and Simpson and Bowman and Warren, led the host. Bishop Tigert held that the Church South was as entitled to the name Methodist Episcopal Church as we are; and, passing over the soundness of the argument, he held that the courts might be invoked to compel us to place some such designation as "North" after our name, as the Church South put "South" after her name. The name has persisted ever since the Christmas Conference in Lovely Lane, Baltimore, in 1784, started out under its banner. And inasmuch as the new order of things is to perpetuate "bishops," there can be nothing in the present or future status of Methodism which will make the words "Methodist Episcopal" incongruous.

It is, moreover, worth while mentioning that while there is not the slightest question that the abandonment of our historic banner, and the folding it away among relics in the museum, would cause a deep wrench among some of our people, a wrench that could not be poulticed into acquiescence, no such wrench seems possible to the Church South, at least in predominating numbers. For thirty years there has been a desire on the part of the Church South to change its name. Many in that body have wished to get rid of the word "South."

In 1886 the General Conference ordered the bishops to submit to the vote of the Conferences the proposition to change the name of the Church to "The Methodist Church in America." It has been a live issue from that day to this. During the past ten years it has been a very insistent question. The Birmingham General Conference in 1906 had it to the fore. The General Conference at Asheville in 1910 had a somewhat bitter discussion, the bishops finally interposing their veto, thereby causing a considerable amount of

ill feeling. Finally Dr. Horace M. Du Bose introduced a motion directing the bishops to submit to the Church, according to the constitutional process, an amendment changing the name of the Church. The change was not approved. The incident does, however, show that the subject is not a stranger in that body, whereas we have never read of a single instance wherein a member of our body has proposed it—except, indeed, it was assented to by our commissioners in 1911—a matter that under the circumstances, requires no explanation.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, if we sense the rank and file and understand it, would be reluctant to haul down that banner which for one hundred and thirty years has floated in the heavens, in many lands, which has floated also above the Southern Church since '44; which flies full from the mast to-day over the

Methodist Episcopal Church,
Methodist Episcopal Church, South,
African Methodist Episcopal Church,
African Zion Methodist Episcopal Church,

British Methodist Episcopal Church,
Free Will Methodist Episcopal Church,
Colored Methodist Episcopal Church.

There are, to be sure, some colored bodies which omit the word "Episcopal," but their combined membership reaches scarcely eleven thousand. There are the Free Methodists and the Protestant Methodists, but the former have bishops.

It seems to us that this hauling down of the historic name of the greatest Protestant force in this hemisphere—a banner that gloriously flies above seven million and more loyal and aggressive Christians, a name which had the sanction of John Wesley, a name known from Hammerfest, the northernmost town on the planet, to Punta Arenas, the southernmost town, and from the river to the ends of the earth —should be explained by reasons that are very, very plain, and very, very conclusive.

It may be necessary, in order to achieve organic union, to make this alteration; this question is discussed in a later chapter. If it is a necessity, no one will intervene an appeal albeit a multitude

that no man can number will feel a pang as that noble and mighty ensign comes down to fly from the mast no more.

On the other hand, we can but feel that the old historic name would, if given to a united Methodism, bring tears and hallelujahs to the heroes who are henceforth to march forward side by side.

CHAPTER V

UNION BY DIVISION

I

THE proposed Plan provides for a trisection of the territory of the United States. It provides for three white Sub-General Conferences, called Quadrennial Conferences, each "Quadrennial Conference to have *full legislative* power" over matters belonging to its area.

Stripped of all ambiguity, what does this mean? It means, first of all, the trisection of the United States into three independent areas. Upon what basis will this trisection be made? Primarily on the political lines existing when the Church was divided in 1844. There has been some talk among the uninformed that the trisection of the United States would be by lines running North and South from the Canadian boundary line

to the Gulf and the Rio Grande, but no member of the Church South has been so forgetful as to make or harbor such a suggestion. That is not the form behind the veil.

II

The proposition to unite American Methodism by cutting it up into quite independent areas and jurisdictions, into three Semi-General Conferences called by the Joint Commission "Quadrennial Conferences," is a very ancient theory of the Church South. It must be at least forty years since Nathan Scarritt began advocating it as the solution of the problem of organic union. He taught that there should be three General Conferences, one North, one South, and one West, and that the Negroes should be solidified into a fourth. The Joint Commission proceeded on the lines Nathan Scarritt laid down. Significantly the General Conference of the Church South erased the fourth Quadrennial Conference. Now we know definitely what is

in store. If any one thinks differently, let him ask any ten leaders of the General Conference which unanimously imposed that proposition; let him poll the Conferences in South Carolina or Louisiana, for example. He will return with considerable food for thought—and caution.

The phrase, "three Quadrennial Conferences," means, and only means, the division of American Methodism into three areas, one of which shall be *practically* the area of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on the fifteenth day of May, 1845; a second which shall be *practically* what Bishop McTyeire graphically defined as "the portion of the [Methodist Episcopal] Church not included in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in 1844," and, a third, which shall include the area in the West which has been entered since 1844. It is a waste of time to chatter about any other lines of "division."

III

In all matters of legislation, the section

now known as the Church South will be as independent of the section now known as the Methodist Episcopal Church, as it is to-day. Nothing voted in that Sub-General Conference, meeting every four years, will be subject to review by any other body, no matter what may be the nature of that legislation; and the same, of course, will be true as regards the action taken by the Sub-General Conference representing the area in which what is now the Methodist Episcopal Church will then find its circumscribed habitation. This is plainly stated in the bond.

The basis of carving the area of American Methodism, therefore, if it comes to pass, will be along lines that keep the North in the North, the South in the South, and hold the common ground of the Far West, where without let or hindrance, both bodies are now building altar against altar in concord and good feeling, a third by itself. The dream of Nathan Scarritt will be attained.

Accepting, then, the classification there laid down, Methodism when united by reorganization will find herself actually

attaining the status in which American Methodism was by one section supposed to be after the adjournment of the General Conference in New York in 1844, and particularly after the "general convention" in Louisvile, Kentucky, in May of the following year. Thereafter there can be between the Sub-General Conferences ("Quadrennial Conferences") of the united Church, in the North and the South, practically, at most, only the beautiful sentiments of "Christian regards and fraternal salutations" such as were brought from the Church South to our General Conference in Pittsburgh in 1848. What more can there be? As for lifting a voice in the affairs of the other, either north or south of the median parallel of latitude, each body, the Church in the North and the Church in the South, will be as dumb as it is to-day. This is imbedded in the bond; it is a "basic principle," to use a phrase of Bishop Hoss, in the Plan sent to us from the Church South. In reality will it not be two Churches masquerading as one?

There will be a Methodist Episcopal

Church, South, and a Methodist Episcopal Church, North, with another Methodist Episcopal Church in the Far West, each electing its own bishops and having sole jurisdiction on all matters pertaining to the respective areas; with "über alles," over all, a General Conference of two houses to confer on what is left.

IV

Looking backward to the date of the bisection of the Church in 1844, the General Minutes of that year show there were nineteen Annual Conferences in the North and fourteen in the South. How will it stand when we have got "union by reorganization"? We define the areas first in States. Let it be said at once that the classification is somewhat superficial, particularly so far as a third quadrennial area is concerned. The people would have to be consulted, beyond question, but if the "union by reorganization" proceeds to a hard conclusion, we do not see how it can be much different from the classification we here set down. And be kind

enough to bear in mind that this is no work of preference or prejudice on our part, but a consideration of the hard, cold facts as they will come out when we have got "union by reorganization." There may be States which will recoil from this classification and refuse it. But none the less the assignment is implied in any working out of this concrete principle of "union by division" or, to use the technical phraseology, "union by reorganization," if that reorganization is to be a fact.

We present the States, therefore, and their area:

FIRST QUADRENNIAL CONFERENCE

States	Sq. Miles
Maine	33,040
New Hampshire	9,305
Vermont	9,565
Massachusetts	8,315
Connecticut	4,990
Rhode Island	1,250
New York	49,170
New Jersey	7,815
Delaware	2,050
Pennsylvania	45,215
West Virginia	24,780
Ohio	41,060
Indiana	36,350
Illinois	56,650

States	Sq. Miles
Kansas	82,080
Michigan	58,915
Wisconsin	56,040
Iowa	56,025
Minnesota	83,365
19	665,980

SECOND QUADRENNIAL CONFERENCE

Maryland	12,210
Virginia	42,450
North Carolina	52,250
South Carolina	30,570
Georgia	59,475
Florida	58,680
Alabama	52,250
Mississippi	46,810
Louisiana	48,720
Arkansas	53,850
Missouri	69,415
Tennessee	42,050
Kentucky	40,400
Oklahoma	70,057
Texas	265,780
Porto Rico	3,606
16	948,573

THIRD QUADRENNIAL CONFERENCE

Colorado	103,925
New Mexico	122,580
Arizona	113,020
Nevada	110,700
California	158,360

States	Sq. Miles
Utah	84,970
Washington	69,180
Oregon	96,030
Idaho	84,800
Montana	146,080
North Dakota	70,795
South Dakota	77,650
Wyoming	97,890
Nebraska	77,510
Alaska	590,884
Hawaii	6,449
16	2,010,823

We do not say this alignment is final. It will be found, however, we confidently believe, that anyone who makes a change in this "suggested" alignment will have trouble on his hands to make the Plan workable in actual practice.

We have got to have some such working basis, if American Methodism adopts this Plan. It is our conviction that *an attack on this classification will prove in fact an attack on* THE PLAN. And that is precisely why we submit the lists; let us take a square look and see where we are going to come out.

Now, in this we make as yet no criti-

cism of the proposition; and our brethren of the South will so understand. We are simply endeavoring to clear out the fog which envelops some even among us who have in their lips and pens the crystallizing of public opinion. There are among us some who are really and sincerely advocating organic union on the basis of a longitudinal trisection, putting it on the ground that the "reorganized" Church will be divided into three sections by meridians running from Ontario and Saskatchewan to the Gulf and the Rio Grande. Such talk will make the Philistine and uncircumcised put his tongue in his cheek; it will make the knowing smile.

In a matter of this gravity it is not wise to make a leap in the dark.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT UNION BY DIVISION INVOLVES

I

PROCEEDING, then, on this disclosure of the content of the Plan for organic union, a union by division, it will be interesting to note particularly what will by this division fall from the hands of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, into our lap; and what, on the other hand, will fall from our hands into the lap of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in each instance all former claims of every kind being relinquished.

TABLE I

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, IN THE NORTH

States	Members	Churches	Property Valuation
Iowa	334	1	$4,000
Nebraska	176	1	4,000
Kansas	2,009	13	39,000
Illinois	7,168	102	170,800
Indiana	378	1 est	10,000
	10,065	118	$227,800

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has *one* Conference, the Illinois, in the North. We are acquainted with some of its ministers and laymen and prize their friendship. But the specific gravity of the Illinois Conference, South, which was organized in 1866, and, therefore, has been operating in Illinois for almost fifty years, may be seen when it is noted that it has but 102 churches estimated in their general minutes for 1914, at an average of less than $1,700 each, and having after nearly fifty years a total membership of only 7,168; whereas in that same State the Methodist Episcopal Church has 1,901 churches with a membership of 273,210, and Church property conservatively set down at $18,000,000, not to speak of its schools, which have a property of more than $10,000,000.

The rest of the Church South in the North includes one church in Iowa, one in Indiana, one in Nebraska, and thirteen in Kansas; there is also one in Pennsylvania.

When "union by reorganization" is effected, therefore, there will come into

the lap of the Methodist Episcopal Church, *North,* 118 churches valued at something less than $2,000 each (a total of $237,800), and having 10,065 members, of which it is likely a goodly fraction may join us.

But how will this sacrifice on the part of the Church South be compensated? The following table will give some light:

TABLE II

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE SOUTH
(WHITE CONFERENCES)

Conferences	Members	Churches	Property Valuation
Fall Conferences:			
Alabama	11,809	83	$203,330
Blue-Ridge-Atlantic	11,223	197	235,633
Central Tennessee	8,339	124	141,491
Georgia	3,464	71	80,613
Gulf	5,756	85	262,757
Holston	41,013	458	1,366,340
Kentucky	23,933	306	827,335
Missouri	33,398	326	1,536,215
Oklahoma	39,336	316	1,648,720
Saint Louis German	9,652	108	786,795
Spring Conferences:			
Arkansas	6,459	83	187,750
Baltimore	60,991	450	5,411,820
Florida	6,667	91	202,895
Saint Johns River	2,185	35	533,100

Conferences	Members	Churches	Property Valuation
Spring Conferences:			
Saint Louis	41,967	353	3,353,250
South Florida Mission.	1,533	18	32,850
	307,725	3,104	$16,810,894
Southern German	3,906	53	213,950
	311,631	3,157	$17,024,844
Total White.....	311,631	3,157	17,024,844
Total Colored.....	319,425	3,193	7,203,343
	631,056	6,350	$24,228,187

The table reveals the fact that there would fall automatically into the lap of the Methodist Episcopal Church South seventeen million dollars' worth of churches and parsonages, and 311,631 members, to whom the Methodist Episcopal Church, as it is now known, would bid a long farewell. The Church that had known them, will, save as in the *über alles,* the over all, Conference delegates may meet, know them no more forever.

So far as property outside the churches and parsonages is concerned, we would turn over to them also twelve educational institutions having a valuation of more than two million dollars.

These are among the first fruits of "union by reorganization."

II

When we turn our attention to the Western Quadrennial area proposed by the Plan, we find figures scarcely less interesting:

TABLE III

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE FAR WEST, MOUNTAINS AND COAST

Conferences	Members	Churches	Property Valuation
Colorado	33,307	198	$1,917,200
Columbia River	21,086	214	1,204,871
Idaho	8,994	86	532,300
Montana	5,969	66	547,000
North Montana	4,371	67	290,845
Northern Swedish	3,419	69	309,850
Oregon	22,255	194	1,336,930
Pacific German	1,624	28	164,240
Puget Sound	22,123	203	1,553,712
Southern California	51,565	266	4,131,965
California	26,570	239	3,015,376
California German	1,361	20	422,500
	202,644	1650	$15,426,789

In the same area the figures of the Church South show her comparative con-

tribution to the new body. The Church South has long been in that common area. She organized the Columbia Conference in 1865; Los Angeles, 1869; Pacific, 1850; Denver, 1873, four years before Colorado came into the Union; Montana, 1877; New Mexico, 1889; East Columbia, 1889. But the success of the Church South in this Northern area may be judged when the foregoing table, for the identical area, is compared with the following:

TABLE IV

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, IN THE FAR WEST, MOUNTAINS AND COAST

Conferences	Members	Churches	Property Valuation
Columbia	2,010	28	$223,400
Denver	1,869	17	154,500
East Columbia	2,142	30	97,600
Los Angeles	4,748	40	681,069
Montana	1,304	21	143,870
New Mexico	7,251	53	385,235
Pacific	8,585	89	873,650
	27,909	278	$2,559,324

III

Let us then summarize the foregoing tables. it will be then discerned what

will be the investment of each denomination in the trisected body. There will pass absolutely out, not only of the control, but under all the circumstances, also, even of the direct influence of what has been and now is the Methodist Episcopal Church, 631,056 members in the Southern "quadrennial jurisdiction," carrying with them 6,330 churches, worth, with parsonages, nearly $25,000,000, while there will pass into the hands of what was the Methodist Episcopal Church, from the Southern body, 10,065 members, with 118 churches worth $223,800.

Thrown into a table, the contributions made outright will be:

TABLE V—COMPARATIVE

	Members	Churches	Property Valuation
M. E. Church, South, to the North	10,065	118	$223,800
M. E. Church to the South	631,056	6,350	24,246,187
M. E. Church, South, to the Far West	27,909	278	2,559,324
M. E. Church to the Far West	202,644	1,650	15,426,789

It is wide of the mark to think to brush aside these tables by some such observation as, "Well, what of it? Are we not making a *new* Church?" That is the distraction. Does the proposed Plan provide *one* new Church? On the contrary, it proposes three Churches. One will be in the Old South, one in the Old North, one in the Far West; each electing its own bishops, each invested with full and final legislative functions so far as great sections of the national domain are concerned, each completely independent of the other in that government and oversight, and held together by a few common interests such as are served to-day by certain boards, as for example, in Mexico, where without this variety of a union both Churches as they now exist already work together in educational matters, or as in China, where the printing and publishing establishment is satisfactorily managed by a joint board.

The tables do speak with eloquence because the proposed Church is not one: It is three, and here not a trinity—three in one—but a triad, three independent per-

sonalities held together only by a new family name and by such interests as may be left over after the great sectional Conferences have exhausted their "full legislative power" over "all" affairs pertinent to their areas. And how much, when we stop and think closely, are we sure will be left over to be attended to in common? What will the situation be in ten years?

The tables, therefore, bear their eloquent though doubtful testimony to the contribution each of the Churches now existing will make to this proposed new creature—the number of persons, the number of institutions, the value of property that will pass forever not only out of the possession but beyond the influence of the parties historically concerned. The Methodist Episcopal Church will contribute nearly 1,000,000 members and nearly $40,000,000 in churches. The Church South will contribute 37,967 members and $2,789,724 in churches.

And what is the compensation? Not a union but a farewell.

CHAPTER VII

REORGANIZATION, OF WHOM?

I

It is more than likely that when the man in the pew and the average preacher in the pulpit catch a vision of the organic union of American Methodism, their vision is of a Church one as it was one in the days of the fathers, one as it was before it was bisected by the troubles of 1844, a united Church coming again into the historic union it had under Asbury and McKendree, when it swept across mountains and rivers and through forests a tidal wave of salvation, a vision of buried animosities, mutual conciliation, each approaching with open arms to greet a brother before the ancient altar. "I have not prayed for organic union," writes a distinguished leader of the Church South, "except

upon a basis of such broad Methodism and fraternal confidence as shall secure completely closed ranks and bring about historic unification." He adds: "It is not to be doubted, I think, that American Methodists of this generation want, as far as their wish has taken shape, an understanding whose final outcome shall be union on the Asburian basis." Beyond question that is a fact. The dream is of a union that makes one. Even so, Lord of the High Priestly prayer, "That they may be one," come quickly!

But is any such sentiment expressed in the bond before us. It cannot be too firmly held in mind what is the objective in the "New Church"; that the *union* proposed is not a *reunion,* not a return to the ancient model of one Methodism; it is a use of the materials at hand in the wreckage of existing denominations to construct a "new Church."

II

When we examine the structure of the

proposed denomination, we find it to consist of several propositions:

1. *Quadrennial Conferences.* The proposed Quadrennial Conferences certainly will represent substantially the geographical boundaries at hand in 1844. This we have shown has been a theory—we might say *the* theory—of the Church South for forty years. The tables already printed demonstrate that this theory involves no contribution from the Church South; if the Church South turns over 10,065 members, 119 churches, worth, with parsonages, $227,800, to the area in which the reorganized Methodist Episcopal Church will still have a seeming existence (what those words mean will be seen as this chapter proceeds), the Methodist Episcopal Church will reciprocate the gift by turning over to the Church South 311,631 members with 3,157 churches, worth, with parsonages, $17,042,844. In the Far West our contributions to the third body will be about ten to one.

Within these boundaries will be held the three Conferences supreme in all

things under certain constitutional restrictions as the General Conference we now know is under constitutional restrictions. The program will not cost the Church South anything, since its strength is confined at the present to the area it will then have; possessing practically all it now has, and it will be enriched by 300,000 more white members than it ever had. It will cost the Church South nothing because it is, in fact, geographically a local Church. It will cost the Methodist Episcopal Church what we have set down because that church is everywhere. We do not associate any but the highest motives with anything the Church South has done in this matter, and we must not be understood as hinting any criticism of those motives; none the less we are constrained to say that such a Plan, even when innocently advocated, as we believe it, generally speaking, to be, would seem quite effective diplomacy. For the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Quadrennial Conference is an expansion rather than a reorganization; for the Methodist Episcopal

Church it is union by excision and exclusion. It would seem that the theory of Quadrennial Conferences, upon which as yet we pass no opinion, might have been devised exclusively in the interest of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

2. *A General Conference With Two Houses.* The General Conference is to consist of two houses, one to be chosen as members are now chosen, and one to consist of members chosen equally from each of the three quadrennial bodies, any legislation to become a law requiring the concurrent action of the two houses. This turns out to be exclusively in the interest of the Church South, because it is the effort to protect what our bishops have defined as the rights of the minority. Said Bishop Hoss in the initial Baltimore meeting of the Commission on Federation, in discussing the theory that "the largest Church going into the new organization would have the greatest weight and influence, . . . but it would be natural and proper for the minority body simply because they are minorities to insist in advance on the safeguarding of their

reserve rights by stipulations of organic law." That tells the whole story.

3. *Bishops.* The Plan provides that bishops shall be elected by the Quadrennial Conferences instead of by the General Conference. This immediately eliminates bishops of what was the Methodist Episcopal Church from Missouri, Oklahoma—where episcopal residences have been established for years—to say nothing of the three other points south of the Ohio River, where such residences are at the present time established by our laws. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, though she has churches in Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, and Illinois, and elsewhere in the North, has no episcopal residence north of the Ohio River. The import of this proscription therefore is apparent. We make no observations here concerning the propriety of the Methodist Episcopal Church having no longer any episcopal residence in Saint Louis and Oklahoma City and elsewhere caring for over 600,000 members and more than $24,000,000 in property in the South; here the only matter before us is who it is that

strips herself to bring in the new order of things.

4. *Episcopal Veto.* The polity of the Church South denies the right of a General Conference to pass on the constitutionality of its legislation, investing a veto power in the College of Bishops and buttressing that veto by such mandates that a veto can be overcome only by an appeal to the long and practically prohibitive constitutional process by which amendments are made to the organic law. This superiority of the bishops to the General Conference the Methodist Episcopal Church has stoutly contested. It has refused to concede that bishops are superior to the General Conference. In the proposed Plan, therefore, the entire concession is made by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

5. *Laymen in the Annual Conference.* The proposed Plan stipulates that laymen shall be members of the Annual Conference. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has that law at present; The Methodist Episcopal Church does not have it. The Church South, therefore,

makes no change; the change is made wholly by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

6. *The Negro.* The proposed Plan excludes the colored members from the proposed new Church. The Methodist Episcopal Church has 325,000 colored members, organized into twenty Annual Conferences with 3,200 churches, worth $7,250,000. The Church South, which for eighty-two years had colored members, numbering at one time 207,776, now has scarcely any; she still has some, but the number is negligible. She has not one colored church building. The contribution made by the Church South in this matter, therefore, is zero; the contribution made by the Methodist Episcopal Church is 325,000 church members, more than $7,000,000 in property, not including the chain of about twenty colleges or academies valued at several millions.

Here, again, we see that the Methodist Episcopal Church South has contributed nothing of her resources in this proposed Plan. The entire contribution is made by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

III

We would fall very far short of our duty were we not to call upon our people to give most serious thought to the implications of this Plan for organic union. The Plan may be just; it may be best. But it is significant that the Methodist Episcopal Church South offers scarcely one real sacrifice. It is the Methodist Episcopal Church that is "reorganized." For that body it turns out to be a union by retreat. If we might be permitted to make an observation, blunt but carrying no sting and no disrespect, we might add that it only remains for the Methodist Episcopal Church to go one final step farther and beg that the name of the new Church be "The Methodist Episcopal Church, South." So far as the Methodist Episcopal Church and her relations to two thirds of the area of her Church is concerned, it seems to be union by annihilation.

Gathering up, then, the alterations and policy of this proposed "Unification by Reorganization," what do we find? We

find that the Church South makes no change whatever *except in what is to her unqualified advantage.*

We find that all the "reorganization" is on the plate of the Methodist Episcopal Church. According to this Plan, there will be organic union when the Methodist Episcopal Church recedes from every historic difference between herself and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; when she, by imitation, accommodates her polity to that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. It will make the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in every essential particular, the type and standard of American Methodism. Fair and high, full from the mast, seen throughout the surface and civilizations of the earth, the flag of American Methodism will be the flag of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, not one particular changed, every contention since 1844 vindicated; and the flag of the Methodist Episcopal Church, its principle of universality, its principle of human brotherhood deeper than color or race, its declaration of the dignity as

well as democracy of its highest tribunal —that flag will be lowered to the dust, never to be raised aloft again. Yea, its very name writ on water.

What kind of "union" is that?

CHAPTER VIII

INTERLUDE

I

If the preceding chapters have produced a feeling of hostility to this Plan on the part of many in the Methodist Episcopal Church, it can scarcely be a matter of astonishment. The proposed Plan is seen to be a proposition that demands from the Methodist Episcopal Church not union but a capitulation at every point. It amounts to an accusation, even an arraignment, of the Methodist Episcopal Church and her history. Conceding every point and claim for which the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has stood, the Plan is a confession of error on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church at all points, at some points, moreover, on which she ought to be sensitive.

Speaking plainly, therefore, we can

scarcely conceive that when these facts are squarely faced any such one-sided Plan, in which the Methodist Episcopal Church is remembered only by its epitaph, will find favor. Will Christendom expect a spectacle so improper, so destructive of self-respect? Does the Church South expect it? Does she really wish it? It is true the Plan came to the General Conference of the Church South bearing the unanimous subscription of the Joint Commission, including our own nine members; and this may have misled many. But this unanimous subscription to the Plan was not intended to be understood as a unanimous commendation of the Plan—or any commendation at all. Bishop Cranston, whom we quote at length in a previous chapter, makes that plain. The Plan is not a *cul de sac*; it is, as is necessary, a port of departure in a quest—such a quest as this little look is making, and had to make, as has already been made so transparently plain.

And in this, if this writer has spoken with something of abruptness, it has not been with the slightest feeling of disre-

spect for our brothers in the South—able, high-minded, conscientious—who have handed this Plan to the Methodist Episcopal Church as a basis of organic union. We do not believe they stopped to think it through. These leaders are men of plain speech, sensitive too, and for that we honor them. That great Tennessean —a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University—we would like to claim him—Bishop E. E. Hoss, at the initial meeting of the Commission on Federation in Baltimore, illustrated this understandable bluntness of speech. He said, "You need have no fear that I shall palter with words in a double sense." Announcing his ultimatum on a matter relating to the presence of certain congregations in certain regions, he said at that time: "The Church that is faithless in one engagement will, if interest or convenience require it, be faithless to another, and does not deserve to be trusted. If it be said in answer to this dictum that General Conferences cannot always control the actions of their agents or enforce the terms of their own voluntary con-

tracts, then it only remains to further affirm that General Conferences which are so impotent are practicing a fraud when they make such compacts. This language is perfectly general in its scope, and hits only those, but all those, who are in the way of it. Here I stand stubbornly, and from this position I will not budge one inch."

It is this kind of directness that this little book would emulate, because if the matter stands in broad daylight it can be looked at, taken hold of, turned over and about, so all concerned will know what is being done when this Plan for organic union is before American Methodism. To our thinking, speaking the final word on this phase of the matter, the proposed Plan for organic union is but a masquerade.

II

But is there not in the Plan a suggestion on which without the surrender of a single atom of self-respect on the part of any branch of American Methodism

this Methodism can become one? We are certain there is. We are certain that but few alterations in the Plan before us are necessary to a final plan on which all can agree, a plan that will protect all minority bodies, a plan that will guarantee a proper representation among bishops, officials, general as well as local boards, a plan that will protect the constitution against invasion by the General Conference, and, supremely, a plan that will make Methodism truly one.

We understand perfectly well that no plan which the Methodist Episcopal Church can send in return to the Church South will meet her approbation for one moment unless that plan strikes the consciousness of the Church South as just as well as fraternal, protecting it from the hazard of tyranny of even a well-meaning majority. We understand that any plan must stand the closest scrutiny, the crucible of strong intellects, the spontaneous response of the people, that it must be inviting, or it will fail. We will never bring the *people* of the two Methodisms nearer together by a vise.

Is such a plan possible? We believe it. And we proceed, as regards the structural character of the Church that is to be, to make a few suggestions. And God forbid that one word should be set down except in the spirit of Him who prayed that his disciples "may be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

CHAPTER IX

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

I

ORIGINALLY there was no General Conference. From the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784 till 1791 the gatherings of the preachers for conference on church questions were called "The Conference," and this body met in sections, in various parts of the connection, varying from three in 1785 to sixteen in 1792. This number was never understood to impair the unity or the supremacy of the one body known as "The Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

The year 1792 ranks with the year 1784, when the Church was created, and 1808, when the delegated General Conference was created, as a milestone in our constitutional history. In that year the Discipline first contained the question, "Who

shall compose the General Conference?" ("Answer: All the traveling preachers in full connection.") And also: "Who are members of the (Annual) Conference?" ("Answer: All the traveling preachers of the district or districts who are in full connection.") It was provided that the General Conference should meet four years later. The answer to the question, "How often shall the District (Annual) Conferences be held?" was, "Annually." For the first time the election of the bishops was made the exclusive function of the General Conference, and also for the first time these officers were made amenable to this tribunal, "the General Conference." From 1792 the General Conference and the Annual Conference have each developed along the lines then defined.

II

It is now proposed to reconstruct the General Conference, making it a body with two houses. The Plan provides: "We suggest that the General Conference

shall consist of two houses, each house to be composed of equal numbers of ministerial and lay delegates. The delegates in the first house shall be apportioned equally among the Quadrennial Conferences . . . The ministerial delegates in the second house shall be elected by the ministerial members in the Annual Conferences, and the lay delegates by the laity within the Annual Conferences, under equitable rules to be provided therefor." That is to say, the members of the second house of the General Conference are to be elected precisely as we now elect delegates, ministerial and lay, to the General Conference. The members of the first house are to be elected by a new, not to say extraordinary, body at present unknown to Methodism anywhere, a novelty to which due attention will be given presently.

What is the purpose of this theory of two houses in the one General Conference?

First of all, we will find a partial answer to the question if we recall the fact that this proposition is not new.

Fifty years ago the proposal for two houses for the General Conference had a momentary vogue. One of the most learned speeches ever prepared for a General Conference was that of Dr. William H. Perrine for the Conference of 1872, the year in which lay representatives first appeared in that body. In a speech of great length and learning Dr. Perrine made a plea for such a reconstruction of the General Conference. His argument, however, was based on *orders,* one house to contain only ministers, the other only laymen, while the Plan now before American Methodism calls for two houses based on *sectional areas.*

We can but conclude that the undergirding reasons for the proposal then and the proposal now were dissimilar, and for reasons that will become visible as we look at the manner in which the members of the first house were, and are, to be chosen. The whole gravamen of Dr. Perrine's argument was the preservation of the constitution from invasion by the General Conference. In defense of his thesis Dr. Perrine quoted the writings of

Jefferson, Hamilton, Chief Justice Story, Webster, and others on the dangers to the Constitution if one body consisting of one house is invested with the power of irresponsible legislation, and of pronouncing that legislation constitutional. Dr. Perrine's motive, therefore, was not the motive of the two houses which it is now proposed to create, because, as we have pointed out, the Plan now before us definitely provides a totally different mechanism, namely the College of Bishops, for safeguarding the constitution from invasion. This leaves the purpose of this double house entirely different. When we observe that one group of delegates is to be elected by the Quadrennial Conference north of Mason and Dixon's line, and a group of precisely the same size is to be elected by a minority south of Mason and Dixon's line, with another group of precisely the same size elected by a Quadrennial Conference to be constituted in the Far West, the reason steps from behind its arras. The present Plan is proposed, not to protect the constitution, but to protect sections—in brief,

to protect the equality of the minority. The three groups are to have exactly the same number of members, though the Northern Quadrennial Conference would include three million members, while the Western Quadrennial Conference includes less than three hundred thousand.

We cannot believe that fair play would be jeopardized by any tyrannical assumption due to our numbers vastly predominating over the Church South if the General Conference should be constituted precisely upon its present lines. At the same time, when a denomination possessing a membership of two and a half million comes into a compact with a denomination of four and a half millions, it is to be expected that the body having the lesser number—albeit a denomination of two and a half millions is by no means a small body—should have its minority rights fully conserved in the compact of union. We approve therefore of Bishop Hoss's contention. The bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church at their Des Moines meeting in the spring of 1914, expressly declared themselves in favor of

safeguarding in the organic laws such minority rights. It is, moreover, perfectly safe to make the prophecy that no plan of union which forgets to adequately conserve minority rights will find acceptance. The question is whether the proposed Plan offers the preferable or proper mechanism, or whether another plan as perfectly dependable and equitable and popular and cosmopolitan is at hand. We are certain there is. It will be a General Conference not of two houses, but a General Conference of one house possessing two divisions, available at any moment to fully protect any minority interest.

III

With a few observations, we pass by the incompatibilities of the proposed Plan: it is expensive; it perpetuates sectionalism; it doubles the committees and subcommittees; it creates the cumbersome necessity of bringing every proposition before two bodies with the incidental parliamentary delays and obstacles incident to such a scheme. It lessens the

prestige of the General Conference. The item of expense to the Church in supporting practically two General Conferences, the difficulty of providing for this added expense, the loss of power in the multiplication of machinery, contribute to make a millstone around the neck of this proposition, provided a simpler, and particularly provided a better, mechanism is at hand.

If a mechanism equally efficient, simpler, better for the concrete work of the Church, more economical, more popular, is within reach, it cannot be that this Plan for a General Conference which must have two houses, will find favor anywhere, South or North.

A chapter must intervene before this matter is clearly explained.

CHAPTER X

AN INTENSIVE EPISCOPACY

I

THE idea that the episcopacy can be subordinated to the General Conference is abhorrent to the constitutional history of Methodism. The episcopate in Methodism is older than the organized Church; it is one of the materials out of which the Church was made. Episcopacy arose when John Wesley, "preferring an episcopal form of government," sent over a liturgy and with it Dr. Coke in episcopal orders, or episcopal functions, as you please; it is immaterial to the purpose now before us what the individual opinion of any reader may be. We are an Episcopal Church with a scriptural episcopate. We are the first Episcopal Church organized in America. We have no prelatical episcopacy, that is, an epis-

copacy based on the dogma of apostolic succession, and thus handed down from above, pendant, as it were, from the sovereignty of the Pope, or oath of allegiance to the crown. Ours is an episcopacy finding its authority, as is proper, in the Church. The charter which created the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784 recognized an episcopacy already existing. It did not create it. It is true it was at the outset an institution plastic in the Church, but when, twenty-four years later, the Church created the delegated General Conference, it informed that body what it could and could not do as regards episcopacy. It is unthinkable that the General Conference under the charter under which it exists, should knowingly invade, violate, and trample under foot the institution which antedates it, and is protected by the very genius of the Church as well as by the Restrictive Rules.

On the other hand, exercising such rights as did not interfere with the spirit of the Restrictive Rules, General Conferences, acting in behalf of the interests

of the kingdom of God, and in the light of experiences on a wide scale, have instituted reforms, not against general superintendency which General Conference has no power to do, but in the interests of a more intensive application of the office. In the matter of episcopal residences for nearly one hundred years no attention was paid to where bishops lived. Moreover, the early bishops were unmarried and their post office was an itinerant's saddle bags.

In 1872, General Conference having chosen the unprecedented number of eight bishops, the body felt it proper to say: "The Committee on Episcopacy respectfully report that in their judgment one of the newly elected bishops should reside at or near each of the following places; San Francisco, Saint Louis, Boston, Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Council Bluffs or Omaha, Saint Paul." The report suggested that "They should select their residences from the places named, according to their seniority in official position." This was perfectly competent in the General Conference. From

that date, for twenty-eight years, General Conferences fixed the episcopal residences, leaving the bishops free to choose, the choice proceeding in the order of seniority.

In 1900 the Committee on Episcopacy reported to General Conference that "the power to determine where the general superintendents shall reside inheres in the General Conference." This doctrine was adopted and, accordingly, the bishops were assigned to their residences for four years. This departure was dictated by experience; it was necessary; and, being followed unto this hour, it has worked well.

There may be exceptions, but that does not invalidate the value of the rule; there are not always enough bishops of a certain kind to go round.

II

The General Conference in 1904 went a step further. Actual superintendency by bishops in Conference areas and problems expressly under their charge had

been reduced in many instances to the veriest farce. The bishop having jurisdiction over a New England Conference, for example, might live in San Francisco or Buenos Ayres or Zurich. Concrete superintendency was a crying need, but it was an impossibility. To remedy this some went so far as even to champion a districted episcopacy, in which a bishop would have all his official labors fenced in by a given area. The matter was referred to the Judiciary Committee in the General Conference of 1904; the Committee reported adversely. A great debate followed. The great speeches by Dr. Charles W. Smith and Judge Lincoln, of Albany, satisfied the General Conference that in the face of the Restrictive Rule, no such power resided in the General Conference.

The General Conference of 1912, however, solved the problem by distinguishing between the historic general superintendency in the administration or presidency of Conferences, and concrete supervision. The former belongs to the general superintendency. Indeed, the whole

matter of supervision inheres in episcopacy, and mandatory directions invading its right would be a species of tyranny. Nor did the General Conference of 1912 in any particular do more than request the bishops to make the distinction we have referred to. The language of the report is:

CONTIGUOUS AND CONTINUOUS EPISCOPAL SUPERVISION

1. We recommend that in the intervals of the Annual Conference sessions each resident bishop shall be held responsible for the administration of the spiritual and temporal interests of the Church in those Conferences adjacent to his residence, the decision as to which Conferences are adjacent to a particular residence being left to the Board of Bishops. To make this provision effective, we recommend that one month after the adjournment of an Annual Conference the presidency of the Conference shall pass to the bishop resident in the group of which it forms a part, and shall remain so until one month before the next ensuing Annual Conference.

2. In order to secure detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the activities, achievements, and needs of the entire connection, each bishop is requested to make quadrennially a written report of his administration of the group over which he exercises residential supervision, these reports to be presented to the General Conference and printed

in the General Conference Handbook and Journal.

3. For the purposes of securing more economical and efficient presidential administration, the bishops are requested to arrange the Conferences in America in three divisions, and to assign each bishop for presidential administration to the Annual Conferences of the division within which he has his official residence.

The value of this plan rested absolutely in its wisdom tested by experience. The bishops arranged the Conferences in the United States into nineteen contiguous groups for residential supervision. They were able to do this by accepting the request that the government of an Annual Conference pass at fixed dates into the hands of the residential bishop. The value of the Plan is everywhere evident. As time goes on, while it will never be a law based on the mandatory enactment of General Conference, it will have the same force, as an institution, that the Cabinet of presiding elders or district superintendents has. For notice: until within this quadrennium the word "Cabinet," referring to the manner of making appointments, did not, from cover to cover, occur in the Discipline. The edi-

tors inserted the word in the Discipline of 1912 in a small footnote. Nevertheless, has Methodism any institution more firmly established? Although not legally provided for, it is fundamental to our economy. As Dr. (afterward Bishop) Tigert explained, "It rests on the basis of general usage."

Identically the same is true of residential supervision. It has been seen to be so wise, it has meant such an increase in the value of episcopacy and the forward movement of the Church, that it will never be abandoned. The last section is certain to be rescinded, but that has nothing to do with the value of the ideal. Rather, that section impedes it. The Church, speaking through the General Conference, has requested the bishops to make this arrangement in the interest of both a general and an intensive application of the principle of superintendency. As the years pass, as Bishop Tigert said in still another place of the Cabinet, it too will "rest securely on the basis of common consent and general usage."

III

The Church South has this intensive phase of episcopacy in some particulars. No matter to what part of the planet Bishop Mouzon may be directed by his colleagues, his care of the great, nascent university at Dallas will be his particular concern—we almost said his particular preserve: and even more so it may be said of Bishop Candler in the creation of the university at Atlanta. It would not transform; it would give an added dignity and efficiency to their strenuous labors, if the plan that they give themselves to these residential tasks came in the form of a request from the highest tribunal of the Church. And we invite every Methodist in our sister Church, as well as our own, to give his imagination sweep; to contemplate what it would mean if such an appeal and request were made of every bishop in the reorganized Church, if such a division, for example, of the territory were made as to give not only all Texas or all Georgia, but Virginia, the Carolinas, the farthest South,

as well as New England, the mountain States, yes, all the country, yes, the entire globe, such concrete as well as general oversight with its electrifying momentum, as this provides.

Let it not be said that this program impairs the general superintendency. It does not in experience. One bishop—Bishop Henderson, for example—is a torch-bearer of evangelism, visiting every part of the connection, while responsible as residential head of a particular Chattanooga area. Another bishop delivers the Yale Lectures and presides over any Annual Conference anywhere after the manner of the fathers, but he remains the responsible head and leader of his designated Chicago area. Thus we might pass down the line, showing there has been no infringement of general superintendency in this, but that added to general superintendency is this expanded and intensified vision of service. May the day come when every square mile of territory under the flag and throughout the planet will feel the impact of such leadership. The laymen

crave it. They are right. The "new Church" should incorporate it in what Bishop Tigert calls "common consent and general usage."

It will be seen in the next chapter what an important bearing this development of episcopacy has on the enigmas presented in the Plan for the structure of the General Conference in the united Church that is to be.

CHAPTER XI

THE SUPERVISIONAL CONFERENCE

THE Plan proposed for the structure of the new Methodism in this hemisphere provides that "the governing power of the reorganized Church be vested in one General Conference and three or four Quadrennial Conferences" which shall have "full" legislative power over all affairs pertaining to their respective areas. They shall choose their own bishops; they shall fix the boundaries of Annual Conferences within their respective jurisdictions. From them shall be elected the delegates who shall constitute the first house of the General Conference.

The bearing of this Plan on anything resembling organic union has already been pointed out. It is not organic union but organic sectionalism. It divides the country once more as it was bisected at

the separation in 1844, having a third section in the newer Far West. We have seen that it perpetuates and fosters the very thing organic union is intended to erase. It does not resemble the division of a nation into several States; rather it is what the nation would be if there were a plenary Congress south of Mason and Dixon's line and another north of that line—with still another Congress over all.

At the same time it must be no less plain that something like that to which the theory of Quadrennial Conferences points the way is a necessity. There are plenty of matters in which considerable sections of the country have a homogeneous and common interest. It is at this moment a weakness in each denomination that vital interests which touch certain large regions in common should have no mechanism for adequately considering them. The weak are left to their isolation and loneliness, when it might be otherwise. Not to carry the illustration too far, but to bring it forward because it does illustrate what we are trying to

make plain, we may cite the Roman Catholic organization. The Roman Catholic Church, while having its centralized power, divides the United States not only into dioceses but as well into provinces over them. There are fourteen of these. Each province is presided over by an archbishop; under him are all the bishops in the dioceses which constitute the province. The province of Boston, for example, embraces all New England, which is divided among eight dioceses. The province of Oregon City embraces the seven dioceses of Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Washington, and the prefecture of Alaska. It is plain that such an organization enables the Church to get the deeper scrutiny of any situation, to do team work, intensive, strategic, because of a structural organization of its field. A colored map showing this Catholic provincial division of the United States is informing at this point.

The necessity of some such arrangement of the United States, from the standpoint of Methodist efficiency, is every little while coming to the surface.

Regional conventions are an illustration. Not many months ago a convention of all New England Methodism was held in Boston, and it was deemed of sufficient importance that the addresses and resolutions of the convention should be brought out in book form for intensive study by New England Methodists, and for that matter, by the Church at large. It was not a convention merely for Fourth-of-July, spread-eagle oratory, garnishing the graves of the fathers; it was a convention held by representatives of the six New England Conferences and addressed by experts in the interest of the concrete problems that face New England Methodism *now*—that is to say, it was a gathering of regional Methodism to take stock of itself, to do what neither the remote General Conference, nor the Annual Conferences acting separately, could do. The definitive proof of this is seen in the resolutions. What might it not have meant had these resolutions been instead legislation with a certain binding and legal as well as moral obligation, and what might it not mean, not only to

New England Methodism but to every other region, if a regional conference were provided for?

II

The Methodist Episcopal Church has already taken the first step for providing such regional Conferences. The General Conference of 1912 established, as we have seen, not only episcopal residences, but requested the bishops to make those residences the center for a regional or residential supervision of the Church. The bishops were invited to divide among them the Conferences for such purposes of supervision, said groups to be as contiguous and near as practicable to the fixed residences. The General Conference then requested the bishops to arrange so that while maintaining the general superintendency, they should arrange that the supervision of the Conferences should, thirty days after the adjournment of an Annual Conference, return to the residential bishop and there remain until thirty days before the ses-

sion of the next ensuing Annual Conference. This perpetuates the historic general superintendency of Annual Conferences as in the days of the fathers, but it establishes a residential supervision which brings the bishop into the problems, the anxieties, the definite needs and programs of the churches in a definite area.

Experience has shown that this grouping of the Annual Conferences, applied throughout the planet, is a master stroke. The plan has displaced a remote and somewhat imaginary, not to say Pickwickian, leadership by evolving also a concrete superintendency, and the Church has felt the thrill. It has linked Annual Conferences together according to their homogeneous problems. If in any case the division or the superintendency has been unwise, experience has demonstrated at least the wisdom of the plan.

III

It is but an easy, a normal, and, we believe, even inevitable step from this

regional supervision to a regional or Supervisional Conference. It might be provided that once each year the bishop shall convene all the district superintendents in his residential jurisdiction for the careful joint consideration of problems that face that area. What a chance for a denominational program! It might then be provided that once quadrennially a Conference should be held in which not only the district superintendents ex officio, but delegates from the Annual Conferences, divided equally between ministerial and lay delegates, should be convened; that this Conference, on appeal from the Annual Conferences, might consider such matters as Conference boundaries; that colleges whose constituency and management reach over Conference lines, immigration, hospitals, and the hundred and one other matters in which that area has a deep community of interest, should be considered, not academically but collectively, intensively, and with power.

In the meantime, between the meeting of these regional or, better, Supervisional

Conferences the bishop and his district superintendents will do team work; they will all meet annually in executive session; there will be a mutuality of understanding and incentive. Of course the bishop will also meet the superintendents of each Annual Conference. The analogy of the Roman Catholic scheme is realized; the bishop is the metropolitan; the district superintendents are the diocesans; there is all the opportunity for joint work, for concentration in program and supervision, which has in it the potency of a vast advance. The amplest provision should be made to insure the Church South the amplest fair play in this matter.

IV

This Supervisional Conference, meeting quadrennially, might well be charged with electing delegates to the General Conference, not to a separate house, as proposed by the Plan before us, but to the one body, the number of ministerial and lay delegates thus elected to the General Conference to be equal, and the numbers

from each Supervisional Conference to be strictly equal to each of the others.

For very obvious reasons, as we have seen, there should be but one house in the General Conference. But to preserve the rights of the minority in every particular, as regards elections as well as legislation, the "new Church" might well do away with voting by orders—which is of recent origin at the best—and substitute the right of the delegates either from the Supervisional or from the Annual Conferences to call for a separate vote, precisely the same rules to obtain under this new arrangement as are now the law as regards voting by orders.

Voting by orders has never been popular. It was introduced in 1872 when the laymen came into the General Conference, and was intended to be simply a compensation to the laymen—who were entitled to only two delegates to each Annual Conference—for not having equal representation, and as an equivalent to equal representation. That reason has now ceased to exist. Voting by orders, with but possibly one or two exceptions

each, has never been used by either the Methodist Episcopal Church or the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The plan here proposed of a General Conference having two divisions, offers a veto power on unwise legislation, even when it is constitutional; it tenders an infallible and instant refuge to brethren either North or South or West in the event of anything resembling the tyranny of the majority; and, unlike the Quadrennial Conference, it has no constant temptation to redden sectional scars. It would make for *union*. Every advantage of the proposed Quadrennial Conference is there; every disadvantage is eliminated. The Supervisional Conference is in itself a necessity to the efficiency of each of the two churches and to one as much as the other, as they now are. The plan is workable; it is economical; it is local. It bears a similitude to the division of functions between the nation and the States; it makes for solidarity, for popularity, for the deepest sympathies, such as are out of the question in the Plan that now mocks us in the face.

As for the General Conference, it would have ever present its two divisions; it would have a double source of membership, such as is evolved in the theory of Quadrennial Conferences; all details are easy of fair and practicable adjustment. The General Conference would continue to vote on common questions as now. But on any question in which it seemed best, the two divisions could on a moment's notice vote separately compelling all rights to be studied and guaranteed.

If the suggestion here made appeals to the good sense, as it can but appeal to the chivalry of American Methodism, it will be seen that the greatest obstacle to organic union is brushed aside. We will be able, if only our prayer for reunion as in the older days is animated by the Saviour's passion and prayer, to proceed in our pathway of hope for a union that unites.

CHAPTER XII

COMPOSITION OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

I

AN investigation of the forms in which the structure of the Church is found through the ages will reveal the fact that structure is an adaptation to prevailing institutions. It is an adjustment of political or social forms already existing to the needs of the religious organization. One can tell in advance, for example, what will be the form of the organization of the Jewish Church as it was created at the exodus, if he is informed as to the organization of the religion of Egypt out of which the migration was to come. Studying Karnak, he could foretell even the structure of the temple with its holy place.

This rule applies to the early ages of

Christianity. Hatch has shown us that the Christian Church being, as all know, quite altogether a Gentile institution, derived its framework, to a large degree, from the organization of the Gentile community. The early years of the Christian era proceeded in a perfectly natural and orderly manner in the formation of religious associations. It was natural for the early converts to associate themselves together. In an age of poverty Christians naturally were exceptionally poor; charity, alms, were the first necessity of the early organizations, for the local community, with its widows of martyrs, its brethren in prison, its members "scattered abroad"—also there were the necessities of discipline.

There is no doubt that in the primitive time there was a fundamental principle of equality and democracy, even when the Church had developed its offices of deacons, elders or presbyters and bishops. Hatch has proven that laymen no less than the church officers could, upon occasion, teach or preach, baptize, celebrate the Eucharist, exercise discipline. The

officers of the infant societies had a prior right but not an exclusive right to the performance of ecclesiastical functions, nor did this original conception at once or all at once pass away. In time there developed the monarchial episcopate. But first there was a parish bishop, later the village bishop, later the diocesan bishop, then the metropolitan bishop, and in time it was but one more step, though it was a vast step, to the imperial papacy.

This principle being true, what ought the Church to aim at in our day and in our land as far as its structure is concerned? Professor Briggs affirms that in America the Church should adapt herself to the undergirding ideas of our political society: "In modern times, especially in the United States of America, the government divides itself into three channels —the legislative, the judicial and the executive"; but, he adds, "the Christian Church has not developed in its government so far as the modern state."

When we examine the Annual Conference in the light of what we have seen

above, and, in particular, in the light of Dr. Briggs's dictum, we are able to test the character of the Annual Conference.

II

The Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, if it is scrutinized somewhat carefully, will be found to contradict at least in part the statement of Professor Briggs; it will be found to possess and build upon three distinct functions—the executive, the judicial, and the legislative. The functions of the bishop in the Cabinet are purely executive. He appoints the members of his Cabinet, he fixes the appointments of the preachers. In this his power is absolute and irresponsible. From this use of his executive power there is no appeal. Asbury would not even make use of a "Cabinet" of presiding elders to assist in the appointment of the ministers. It was McKendree who, in 1811, refused to make the final revision of the appointments as furnished him by Asbury until he had consulted with the presiding

elders, and so, a generation after the organization of the Church, founded this universal custom and protection. But he did not have to.

To this day the very existence of the Cabinet as we know it rests upon the will of the bishops. No one but the bishop is responsible for what is done in the Cabinet. There is not one word in the Discipline defining the Cabinet or alluding to its possible functions. Not until 1912 did the word "Cabinet" appear in the Book of Discipline, and then only incidentally in a footnote.

We dwell upon this to show that the executive function in the Annual Conference rests absolutely in the episcopal office. It cannot be invaded and it is not shared by any other. We state the case thus directly also because some have seen in the membership of laymen in the Annual Conference such an invasion. During the General Conference of 1912, when the question of the admission of laymen to the Annual Conference occupied the floor, a speech was made claiming that laymen should be in the Annual Confer-

ence so they might become members of the Cabinet and officially participate in fixing the appointments of the ministers. There is not conceivable a greater absurdity. The bishop has as much right and as much need of calling laymen into his Cabinet now as he could have under any possible provisions of our polity. The Cabinet is absolutely under the control of the bishop. The district superintendents have no legal rights in it; no conceivable changes in our polity that did not trample under foot the Third Restrictive Rule would give laymen any more right to intrude into the Cabinet than they possess at this moment. Our constitutional history—the refusal of Joshua Soule to accept the office of bishop when it was proposed to invade this executive office and say that the Annual Conference might elect his counselors, the presiding elders, thus limiting his executive power —has settled all that. Nothing is so inconceivable as that laymen incompetent because of their ignorance of *all* the charges in the Annual Conference and *all* the ministers in the Annual Confer-

ence, shall sit in the Cabinet by virtue of any legislation on the part of any General Conference. Our church polity is not dictated by unreason. When laymen give all their time to traveling through the Conference year after year until after years have passed, by virtue of such knowledge they finally know thoroughly the individuality of all the charges and the personality of all the ministers, it may be that some bishop will appoint them to sit in the Cabinet and give him advice as to the making of appointments. Foresooth.

If, in the exercise of his executive function, the bishop needs counsel in particular cases, it is likely he will ask it from laymen, and it is perfectly proper; he does that now. And it is quite certain he will then receive advice in no larger measure than it is gratuitously tendered to him as our polity now is. The whole matter of laymen in the Cabinet, therefore, may be waved aside as irrelevant. The executive function in the Cabinet, precisely as in our political structure, is in the sole hands of the executive.

III

The Annual Conference is charged with passing upon the qualifications of candidates for the itinerant ministry. The Quarterly Conference, consisting of laymen, in which the preacher in charge and the district superintendent have no voice, considers the candidate for the ministry, their lay brother; the laymen pass upon his intellectual equipment, they underwrite his Christian character and spirituality, they are responsible for his knocking at the wicket of the Annual Conference; they then pass him on to those who are experts, who alone have the technical qualifications, in experience, in study, in specialization, to examine him as he progresses in his studies and in the holy and delicate qualifications for the pastoral ministry as to whether the recommendation of the laity is justified. Moreover, his future brethren, as the years come and go, pass every year upon his ministerial character. His name is called. It is self-evident that in this delicate and sacred matter his peers, his brethren in

the itineracy, alone can understand—can pass proper judgment. This is done every year so long as the minister lives, whether in active work or not. It is a strictly judicial function and, as we have seen, it is a natural prerogative of the ministry and only of the ministry. Whether the minister continues available; whether he studies, toils, leads, is a matter for the Quarterly Conference to enlighten the district superintendent upon. On such enlightenment the district superintendent will act; we all know that. And should it be discovered that the minister aforesaid is idly falling to the rear; that he has come to care for the fleece more than for the flock; that his usefulness is at an end, his brethren, again acting in their judicial capacity, can, will, and do request that minister to locate. He then returns once more into the laity from which his lay brethren had lifted him. While he walks with the ministers they are his judge. His character is in their keeping. They pass upon it every year.

All this is a purely judicial function;

all rights of the laity are fully provided for. They have the necessary openings for *pronouncing* on the fitness of a minister to continue in the traveling connection; but the final judicial act of pronouncing upon a brother minister is invested in, and it is reserved for, those who understand, those who have dedicated their lives to the same vocation, the same service of the kingdom of God and his Church. It would be an incongruity to pass these judicial functions as to ministerial character to a class which does not understand. The executive function belongs to the bishop; the judicial function relating to ministerial character belongs to the ministry.

IV

But every Annual Conference, and every session of the same, is concerned with matters of legislation. What shall the churches within the boundaries of the Conference do as regards education, temperance, Sabbath-keeping, hospitals, support of the worn-out preachers,

orphanages, periodical literature, international peace, civil and religious liberty, social service, the social evil, marriage and divorce, domestic missions, foreign missions, Sunday schools, State universities, publishing interests, aid of freedmen? This does not exhaust the list of subjects that come up every year for what may be called legislative action, but hints at the list.

Moreover, there is a business side to the Annual Conference. The department of statistics, the Board of Stewards, the benevolent collections, the handling of the Conference finances, intricate, and reaching in cash and vouchers into scores of thousands of dollars, claims on the Conference fund, the trustees of colleges, trustees of hospitals and other institutions—there are sixty-nine questions in the Discipline relating to such matters. Can anyone say that these questions pertain to the ministry in any degree beyond what they pertain to the laity? Are they not common to both? Is there any reason sound in principle why the laity should not have a voice in discussing

these questions and in voting upon them? In a political organization such as we live in in State and nation, is it just to forbid the laymen to participate in these things? Do they not speak and vote upon such matters in the General Conference, the District Conference, the Quarterly Conference? Accordingly, is it not anomalous that the door of the Annual Conference should be shut in their faces as a class when these particular questions are under consideration? Is it not in essence taxation without representation, that the laity as a class are forbidden to enter the inclosure of the Annual Conference when matters so vital to them are under discussion? Forbidden, indeed, to speak or to vote when what practically are levies are being put upon them, and when legislative pronouncements, not of the ministry, but of *the Church,* are being rendered and published to the world?

It is just at this point that the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church is unfair. We are not at this point democratic; we are exclusive. We legislate by class legislation. The argument of Pro-

fessor Briggs applies to us—"The Christian church has not developed in its government as far as the modern state."

In the following bodies laymen are members of the Annual Conference: Methodist Episcopal Church, South; Methodist Protestant, Methodist Church of Canada, Irish Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Australian Methodist, French Methodist, South African Methodist, Congregational Methodist, Free Methodist, not to mention several other important bodies. One, and but one, great division of the Methodist family does not tolerate lay participation in any possible part of the Annual Conference. That body is the METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

In the proposed plan for organic union it is provided that laymen shall be members of the Annual Conference. This is right in principle. It is in harmony with the institutions in the midst of which we live. It involves no loss of ministerial rights in purely ministerial matters. It has been proven to be wise and in no case a detriment among the Methodist bodies who have imbedded it in their funda-

mental laws. It is in line with the normal and orderly development seen in our own past. Is it saying too much to say it is inevitable?

To recapitulate: The executive branch of the Annual Conference is the function of episcopacy. Questions of ministerial character belong to the ministry. Questions of legislation and of business belong to the Church—that is to say, to the ministry and laity.

Any plan for organic union should include lay membership in the Annual Conference.

CHAPTER XIII

TO PREVENT UNCONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION

I

THE Plan before us provides: "We suggest that neither the General Conference nor any of the Quadrennial Conferences be invested with final authority to interpret the constitutionality of its own actions." This raises the question as to where shall be lodged the power to prevent unconstitutional legislation. The question is interesting; it is also important.

II

Unlike the British empire and like the United States of America, the Methodist Episcopal Church has a written constitution: but, unlike the United States of

America and like the British empire, the legislative body of the Methodist Episcopal Church has no check to prevent its exceeding its constitutional powers. Says Judge Thomas M. Cooley: "According to the theory of British constitutional law, the Parliament possesses and wields supreme power; and if, therefore, its enactments conflict with the constitution, they are nevertheless valid, and must operate as modifications or amendments of it. But where, as in America, the legislature acts under a delegated authority limited by the constitution itself, the judiciary is empowered to decide what the law is, and unconstitutional enactment must fall when it is submitted to the ordeal of the courts."

The Methodist Episcopal Church presents the anomaly of having a written constitution, but having no power designated to protect it. No power can pass upon the legality of motions once passed; so, while in having a written constitution it resembles the government under which it exists, it resembles the British Parliament in the irresponsible power of its

legislature to vote measures which invade and nullify the constitution. Correctly speaking, the General Conference is unlike Parliament in that the General Conference is not a sovereignty. It was created by the traveling ministers and exists under limitations, imposed by them, that can as regards certain matters, at least, be enforced in the civil courts. But where such refuge is improper or is passed by, the General Conference is irresponsible.

This cannot be better or more vigorously stated than it has been by that careful and very able expositor of Methodist polity, Dr. (afterward Bishop) John J. Tigert: "Should the [Methodist Episcopal] General Conference at any time, however innocently, exceed its constitutional powers, the Annual Conferences have no protection and no redress; the bishops can only submit or resign; the Church itself, should the guaranteed rights of the membership be invaded, has no remedy save that of revolution. There is no power but that of the General Conference."

Up until 1808, when the delegated General Conference was provided for, there could be no question as to the constitutionality of any action taken by the [General] Conference, since up to and including that time the [General] Conference included all traveling ministers, who in turn composed the Church as legally constituted. The creation of the delegated General Conference brought into existence a body which was granted "full power to make rules and regulations for the Church subject to the limitations and restrictions of 'Six Restrictive Rules.'" We are not without illustrations of what Bishop Tigert describes as this irresponsible and unconstitutional exercise of power. In 1820 General Conference did pass resolutions declaring the right of Annual Conferences to elect presiding elders. This Bishop McKendree regarded as an invasion of the Third Restrictive Rule guaranteeing the appointing power of the bishops. He publicly, before the General Conference, protested against the action. Joshua Soule had been elected bishop previous to this action; he an-

nounced that he felt himself unable to be consecrated if that unconstitutional action was to go into force. In consequence, he declined the office of bishop. The General Conference accordingly voted, not to rescind, but to suspend, the operation of the law for four years. During that time Bishop McKendree submitted the question to the ministers in the traveling connection through the Annual Conferences. In 1824 General Conference again voted to suspend the action as to an elective presiding eldership; in 1828 the act was rescinded. What this incident clearly shows is, first, that General Conference may exceed its legal powers, and, second, that it is not a settled principle that General Conference is the only power competent to determine the constitutionality of its acts.

III

It would seem necessary to our view that some such protection of our free constitution should be provided. It would be well to recall the words of Montes-

quieu—"There can be no liberty where the legislative, executive, and judicial powers are united in the same Senate"—at any rate, there can be no guarantee against encroachments on that liberty supposed to be inviolable. Jefferson held the same doctrine, making the point that it is "no alleviation that these [legislative, executive, and judicial] powers will be exercised by a plurality of hands and not by a single one. One hundred and seventy-three despots would be as oppressive as one." It is, so far as we have discovered in consulting a long list of authorities, a unanimous doctrine of political philosophers that there must be checks on legislation to prevent what is found to be a really despotic invasion, no matter how innocent or well-meaning. We understand how necessary and how precious are such checks provided in the divisions of our civil government for protecting our institutions and our liberty. It is not necessary to associate with its fracture an indifference or contempt as to the constitution; it is only necessary to consider the size and the composition

of the General Conference, and the psychology of such a huge mass gathered from the ends of the earth, to see how easy it might be for the body possessing irresponsible power to pass beyond its legal boundaries. It is not a question of intention; it is a question of fact.

IV

The Methodist Episcopal Church, in the days of her ancient unity, felt this. As early as 1816, a few weeks after his death, a posthumous address of Bishop Asbury was read to the General Conference in which the great leader pleaded for a "Committee on Safety," which should protect the constitution from encroachment by the General Conference. The General Conference of 1820, which has already passed under notice, adopted this resolution:

Whereas, It appears important to us that some course should be taken to determine this business; therefore,

Resolved, That we will advise, and hereby do advise, the several Annual Conferences to pass

such resolutions as will enable the next General Conference so to alter the constitution that whenever a resolution or motion which goes to alter any part of our Discipline is passed by the General Conference it shall be examined by the superintendent or superintendents; and if they, or a majority of them, shall judge it unconstitutional, they shall, within three days after its passage, return it to the Conference with their objections to it in writing. And whenever it is so returned the Conference shall reconsider it; and if it pass by a majority of two thirds, it shall be constitutional and pass into a law, notwithstanding the objections of the superintendents; and if it be not returned within three days, it shall be considered as not objected to and become a law.

It will be seen that this resolution declares: "There does not appear to be any proper tribunal to judge of and determine such a [constitutional] question." It was and it is a fact. Exactly what became of this resolution is a historical enigma. But the next General Conference returned to the subject. A constitutional amendment introduced by Dr. Lovick Pierce, having the same general effect, was adopted. However, it is to be noted that it was carried by a majority of only six votes. A change of three would have defeated it. It is quite likely

that the presiding eldership question caused the heavy minority vote, many of the strong minds of the Church believing it unjust that they were not permitted to select their own presiding elders. It is more than possible that believing in this, and hoping for its realization, they declined to place the veto power in the hands of McKendree and Soule, who held that the movement was a trespass on the precincts of episcopal guarantees under the constitution. The vote against may have been an opportunist vote. In any event, nothing tangible was accomplished.

In 1836 an attempt was made to provide a constitutional brake. A Committee on Judiciary was created, charged with rendering an opinion on the legality of any question that might be submitted to it by General Conference. It had no original powers; it could not arrest unconstitutional legislation; its voice could be heard only when a formal vote requested it.

This Judiciary Committee has been raised at every General Conference fol-

lowing 1836. It has no place in law. The "Rules of Order" simply provide how the committee may be provided. At the present time the Rules provide that "each General Conference District shall nominate from their number one member, and the bishop shall nominate four, making the total number nineteen." But the Rules make no definition of what this committee shall be empowered to do. On the fourth day of the session of 1912 Dr. Horace Lincoln Jacobs moved that "all appeals from Annual Conferences, from individual ministers and from lay members, together with the records of all Judicial Conferences and such legal questions as the General Conference shall desire to send to it, shall be referred to the Judiciary Committee." The committee is the creation of each successive General Conference, which may dispense with it or may omit the germane clause mentioned by Dr. Jacobs. In the Church South all these functions save the last are discharged by the Committee on Appeals and Itineracy. And as for the last clause it is referred to the College of Bishops.

Among us there is no power to arrest illegal legislation. The General Conference is at the mercy of a majority.

V

The Church South has remedied this defect. Not immediately. Soule continued to preach the doctrine that the constitution of the Church should contain a rule providing that there should be a veto power to which to appeal in protection against unconstitutional encroachments. He fell on sleep. But the next General Conference of the Church South, in 1870, provided for a change in the constitution, which met the approval of the Church and which is now imbedded in her organic law. It reads:

Provided, That when any rule or regulation is adopted by the General Conference, which, in the opinion of the bishops, is unconstitutional, the bishops may present to the Conference which passed said rule or regulation their objections thereto, with their reasons in writing; and if then the General Conference shall, by a two thirds vote, adhere to its action on said rule or regulation, it shall then take the course prescribed for altering a Restrictive Rule, and if thus passed upon affir-

matively, the bishops shall announce that such rule or regulation takes effect from that time.

It is impossible to resist the conviction that something in this direction should and will be done. Safety, the sense of security, calls for it, and who will affirm that that call will not be heard?

VI

Believing as we do in the democracy of religious institutions, we are not afraid to trust the General Conference if it is brought in time squarely face to face with the implications of its proposed acts. We scarcely approve, therefore, of the provision of the Church South, because it belittles the General Conference; it has cumbered the protection of the constitution with a Chinese wall which overthrows absolutely the power of the General Conference, making it necessary that any motion which does not meet the legal approval of the College of Bishops must go through all the long labors of the constitutional process in order to become valid. This is more than is needed. If

a properly constituted and learned and loyal mechanism shall regard a proposition as unconstitutional and shall set forth its reasons in writing, in case those written obstacles are valid, at least one third of the General Conference will see it and the proposition will fall by the wayside. In that case, as is proper, it will have to go through the constitutional process. In case, however, two thirds of the body—particularly if the two divisions vote separately—after study and debate, disagree with the reasoning of the veto, the proposition may become binding. It will be seen that the proposition, even if it fails, yet has its chance; the same majority that passed it originally can order the proposition sent the rounds of the constitutional process.

As briefly as seems to be practicable, this matter has thus been set forth. It certainly must be self-evident that some court of appeal must exist. The Methodist Episcopal Church suggests a brake, a check, among the many and somewhat bewildering functions of the Judiciary Committee.

But is the Judiciary Committee our safest protection? This committee is elected by *popular vote* and *after General Conference convenes.* That of itself portrays an unavoidable weakness of the Plan. The committee brings no previous preparation by study or by reflection. It has no library; as a committee it knows nothing of precedents. It renders its decisions over night; and even then a majority vote of the General Conference must submit the matter to the committee or it cannot act. Is there any sense of security in this?

VII

The Board of Bishops is the proper tribunal of arrest. Their life is given to the study of our genius and foundations. They may be supposed to be beyond the reach of petty partisanship or the influence of pugnacious doctrinaires. They are so numerous they must be cosmopolitan. They are accustomed to weigh propositions. Taken collectively, they could not fail at least to try to hold the

scales even, in the weighty matters of our organic laws. When their collective knowledge and judgment was seen in their written opinion, it could but be at least fair; and if this written opinion were not sound as to interpretation, it would be voted down and the proposition become binding. They interpose only a brake on the hasty or innocent nullifying of our organic law.

A proposition is now before the Methodist Episcopal Church for meeting this need. The Wilmington Conference, at its session, March 26, 1913, passed a proposition for amending the constitution of the Church. This amendment reads:

The presiding officer of the General Conference shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the General Conference. If the decision of the chair be sustained by a majority of those present and voting, his decision shall stand. The presiding officer of the day or any other general superintendent may raise the question of law in regard to any proposed legislation. When objection has thus been entered, the entire Board of General Superintendents shall take the matter under advisement and report their decision as soon as possible and their reasons for the decision.

Their report shall be in writing and shall be printed in the Journal of the General Conference. Any member of the General Conference may raise the question of law, and if he be sustained by one third of the delegates present and voting, the general superintendent shall be required to submit their decision in writing to the General Conference. When a decision of the general superintendents has been given their decision may be challenged, but it shall require two thirds of those present and voting to prevail over their decision.

Mr. Justice T. H. Anderson, of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, in advocating some such source of safety in the debate in General Conference in 1912, exclaimed: "The highest duty of the Church, as well as of the state, is to safeguard the fundamental laws of its existence." In the fever and unrest of the hour a citadel of safety should be provided for the constitution. We can but believe that in the ultimate plan which achieves organic union, this full and adequate safeguard here suggested will be provided.

CHAPTER XIV

COLORED METHODISTS

I

PRECISELY what shall be the relation of colored Methodists to reconstructed Methodism? Is it too much to say that this is one of the gravest questions upon which our fellow Christians in both our own and the Southern bodies can pass? If it were a question simply of personal temperament, of preference, expediency, opportunism; if it were local merely; if it were for a year, not a few might find a quick answer to the question. Many, it seems to us, do look at the question from one or more of these viewpoints, and their answer is already the language of the proposed Plan. "We recommend that the colored membership of the various Methodist bodies be formed into an independent organization holding fraternal relations with the reorganized and united Church" is the expression of their platform. They are ready to vote.

But—a moment: This matter is not incidental merely; it is not an episode; it is a formulation and expression of a principle that must be applied to color and caste questions throughout the planet. It is an interpretation of the New Testament. We simply must pause for one moment, therefore, and consider what it is we are doing; then, whatever our final action, we will act with our eyes open.

II

In the earliest ages, when the swarming from their hives in the Asiatic steppes was going on, our Aryan ancestors made their way down the valley of the Indus into the plains of Hindustan. There they found a race perhaps autochthonous, perhaps itself also migrants from some other land. It was a negroid race; we called them, somewhat loosely, Dravidians. The Aryan was of fair complexion, with features we here, after millenniums, are familiar with. We are bound to say that those Aryans did not take with them,

Prince Albert coats nor manicure sets; but they did feel a distinction from the blackskinned race they found in the hills and woods and beside the streams. The Aryan had a higher type of religion, not wanting in spirituality; the Dravidian had incantations and fetishism; he was degraded. There came about some mixture of blood, as is seen in millions today; but the fairskinned intruder did presently draw a line between himself and the negroid possessor of the soil. He frowned upon a mixture of the races. Sweeping our eye over long centuries, we see that he frowned upon intermarriage; he then frowned upon social intermingling, on eating, for example, with the negroid neighbor; he then frowned upon working by his side; he then frowned upon having anything whatever to do with him; he would not buy or sell; he would not touch him; he refused to drink from the same well; he was contaminated even by his shadow. This is not the expression of what transpired in a single day. It began five thousand years ago. The picture is one simply of

race prejudice evolving to its logical end. Race prejudice gave justification and a slogan to the race wars which finally drove the Dravidian back into the southern table land. To-day he numbers not far from fifty-seven millions.

These race distinctions were not fixed, however, nor lawful, until finally by the laws of Manu they were indorsed and enjoined by religion. Then the great chasm was fixed. The Dravidians were outcasts. The Hindu created a hundred thousand castes, but to the Dravidian there was reserved the worst fate—the curse of having no caste at all. He was beyond all caste—an outcast.

What is caste? Or, rather, what is its meaning in the matter before us? Caste comes not from the word *castra,* "camp," an outcast being simply one altogether outside the camp, outside the pales of life and hope, though he is there. The word comes from a word meaning "color"; it means the Dravidian is where he is because of his color. And what has caste done? It has imposed a blight, a despair, a curse, upon three hundred millions of

the three hundred and fifteen millions in Hindustan. The remorseless law of nature that men and races reap what they sow, that curses come home to roost, that any discrimination against a lesser race pulls down the higher race, has through these thousands of years produced at length, and for many generations, its logical outcome. It is likened to the cobra whose venom acts through the heart; in sympathy India is dead. "Caste is Hinduism, Hinduism is caste." Caste is simply another word for class—outcast, a word for hopeless class discrimination.

We all know how impossible, from the human standpoint, is our work of evangelism in the presence of caste. Bishop McDowell comes back from his study of India and reports that not only have we not touched it but that we have not even touched "the fringe of its shadow."

III

This matter of excluding by polite and diplomatic suggestion the Negro from

this reorganized Methodist Church in the United States is based on identically the ground on which the curse of India rests. We exclude him, with polite bouquets and fine words, on account of his color. No other reason is produced; no other reason is possible. He is a Negro. That is sufficient to open the outward-swinging doors of the temple. We are proposing to reorganize the Methodist Church in America and put the colored membership out because it is colored. We are fighting caste (color) in India; we are establishing it in the United States.

And we can readily understand that if it were a matter of a day, we might, or some might—good men and true they are, whose character and motives are beyond question—vote to politely suggest to the Negro to politely withdraw from the fellowship of white Methodists and "be formed into an independent organization."

But is it for a day? Have we no hope and faith that the Methodist Episcopal Church, or the to-be-created "Methodist

Church," is intended and expected to be a permanent institution among the Christian forces of the human race? that we have in our structure and our genius the vitality and economy that can and will endure age after age "until He comes"? This writer cherishes that dream: that Methodism will grow old as Hinduism and Roman Catholicism have grown old; that there is in our life and organism the resident force that makes for longevity, and that, through all these coming ages, we shall be a source of blessing to mankind. And yet, when we are but a little over a century old, when the field of infinite opportunity is before us, we propose to imbed in our polity a principle, a principle of color, which is the foundation principle of caste, concerning which the eternal God of justice has spoken, as he spoke from Gerizim and Ebal, in the arrest, the blight, the penalty, we observe age after age among the hundreds of millions of Hindustan. Whatsoever a Church soweth that shall it also reap. It is a fearsome responsibility.

We must beware. Will we one day

apply this principle to China and India, and refuse membership to yellow or brown races there? Where, then, is the vision of Peter on the housetop? where the proclamation of Paul on Mars' Hill? where the great commission of Jesus as he left this earth? Does not this rule strike the New Testament?

We would offend no brother who has held the other view. But the principle of exclusion on which the proposed Plan rests, no matter in what honeyed phrases it may be masked, is wrong. It is subversive of our scheme of foreign missions. It is an impeachment of the doctrine of the brotherhood of man. Pardon: it is a wrong.

IV

And we may add that, working out practically, the principle has failed with regard to the Methodist Episcopal Church South. This Church was separated and organized in 1845. At that time there were 150,120 negro members, the fruits in large measure of the heroic,

humble, unceasing labors of such vast types of Christians as Bishop Capers, among their own slaves. In 1860 the Church South had 207,776 colored members. At the close of the war the Church South organized, established, and blessed with "fraternal relations" and "independent organization," to quote the language of the proposed Plan, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. And what membership has that Colored Methodist Episcopal Church to-day? The numbers in 1914 were only 236,071 as against 207,776 in 1860, fifty years ago. The shock of the Civil War, indeed, shook from the Church great numbers of her colored members, but the least that can be said is that the experience of the Church South—well intentioned as it is, and carried on by men of the highest character—in this matter of fostering a Church intentionally built on the other side of a chasm dug by color, furnishes no argument why we should indorse it as a definite program of the Methodism of this land. It discloses reefs; it furnishes no chart by which to sail.

V.

What is the ideal? Where is a platform whose planks are sound?

Every race has a right to work out its destiny. It has a right to learn, to make mistakes, to climb, to build. It must do so. A race cannot be carried on velvet by others to character or to success. We have discovered that in the evolution of every belated race. The Indian, the whole foreign missionary enterprise, the Negro, illustrate the thesis that there must be self-education, self-scrutiny, self-mastery, self-inspiration, self-building. In this the nautilus is the one proper symbol, building its ever-enlarging mansion as the seasons roll, leaving its "low-vaulted past" for larger rooms, it has itself constructed by more spacious undertakings and realizations.

But the truth is not all here. It is at most but a half truth. Coupled with self-direction and autonomy must be the vital help of brotherhood—not brotherliness, but brotherhood—a sense, a girdle, of organic obligation, the stimulus and the

restraint of what is, in the last analysis, a common membership in one great family. So far as the colored race is concerned, this was illustrated and it was realized by the Church South in the days of Capers, through the many generations of her work among the Negroes whereby hundreds of thousands were led by her into the Kingdom.

It is childish to say that what we defend here is in reality also by inference a plea for social equality and for the intermixture of the races, as is carelessly bandied about by some foes of our colored work in the South. Did it work out so in the days of Capers? Has the white race less moral stamina than then? The talk that antagonizes a plan for working *with* as well as *for* the colored race on the ground that to have them as members fosters depravity, is a two-edged sword, if we were sarcastic; but we resent the imputation then or now as regards any organization, North or South.

VI

The ideal—an ideal which meets every

suggestion of psychology and Christian principle—is found in the present organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This Church has organized separate colored Annual Conferences; the colored Conferences have colored district superintendents, colored college presidents, colored secretaries for our great boards working among the colored race. There is all the race consciousness, all the incentive to self-help, all the discipline of race experience of "an independent organization." But there is more. Back of it all and with it all is the deeper consciousness of a white Christian fellowship, a white Christian hand clasping the dark-skinned hand, a brother standing alongside, a fellow burden-bearer, a yoke fellow in the identical Church, pulling also at the selfsame but by no means easy load. Is this not the ideal? The colored Conferences have absolute autonomy. They have race conventions. They would have their race Supervisional Conferences and bishops. They have now representation on the Book Committee, on the general committees of the great

mission boards' work in America and in the heathen world. Colored delegates sit in the General Conference. Torches are lit by all these agencies which are carried back among their people.

So far as the Methodist Episcopal Church is concerned, one thing remains to be done to make the ideal practically complete. Whatever happens to this prayer for organic union, the twenty colored Conferences now of the Methodist Episcopal Church should have a colored bishop or bishops. In this the Church South has set the example when, from its own former colored membership, two bishops were ordained by Bishops Paine and McTyeire in Jackson, Tennessee.

VII

The proposed Plan adopted by the Joint Commission on Federation contemplates all that we have here set forth. That plan provides for one colored Quadrennial Conference. True, the Plan as revised and sent to the Methodist Epis-

copal Church by the Church South cuts out the *fourth* Quadrennial Conferences; but it is not a demand, an ultimatum. We understand that the plan as originally agreed to by the joint commissioners, including those of the Church South, would not be unsatisfactory to multitudes of the best types of Southern men. We can apply the principle in the supervisional Conference ideal.

The principle implied in the Plan originally adopted by the Joint Commission on Federation should stand. It is not revolutionary. It cannot be offensive to any Christian. The principle is attained in the supervisional Conference. It gives the colored race the fullest autonomy, the amplest chance; it incites the race to the highest ideal, the most patient endeavor, the deepest Christian character, because, like the work of Capers and of Calvary, it brushes aside caste as unworthy and, as Capers set the example, it invites Christians to go forward hand in hand.

CHAPTER XV

THE NAME

I

THE Joint Commission on Federation adopted this tentative recommendation as to the name for the "new Church": "We suggest, as a plan of reorganization, the merging of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, into one Church, to be known as the Methodist Episcopal Church in America or the Methodist Church in America."

The General Conference of the Church, South, adopted this: "The representatives of this church are hereby instructed to say to the Joint Commission on Unification that the name preferred for the reorganized and united church is the Methodist Church in America."

Probably no one would allow the matter of a name to hold Methodism back from consummating organic union. There are, however, some considerations which make the matter of name serious.

Thomas Ware, who was present at the Christmas Conference in 1784, when the Church came into being, in writing of that Conference, says: "The order of things devised by him [Wesley] for our organization fills us with solemn delight. . . . We did, therefore, according to the best of our knowledge, receive and follow the advice of Mr. Wesley, as stated in our Form of Discipline. After Mr. Wesley's letter appointing Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury joint superintendents over the Methodists of America had been read, analyzed, and cordially approved by the Conference, a question arose what name we should like. I thought to myself and was content that we should call ourselves the Methodist Church, and so whispered to a brother that sat near me. But one proposed, I think it was John Dickins, that we should call ourselves the Methodist Episcopal Church. . . . All being

agreed that the plan of general superintendency was a species of episcopacy, the motion was carried without, I think, a dissenting voice. There was not, to the best of my recollection, the least agitation on this question. Had the Conference indulged the least suspicion that the name they were about to take would in the least degree cross the views or feelings of Mr. Wesley, it would have been abandoned; for the name 'Wesley' was inexpressibly dear to the Christmas Conference, and to none more so than to Asbury and Coke."

In a letter of another date Ware declares that "Dr. Coke was in favor of taking the name 'Methodist Episcopal Church.'" It is not at all improbable that it was after full consultation with Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury that John Dickins took the floor and proposed the name.

The first "Minutes" issued after the Christmas Conference [that is, in 1785] contains a letter from John Wesley in which he designates Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint *superinten-*

dents; a footnote on this word which is printed in italics makes this comment: "As the translators of our version of the Bible have used the word 'bishop' instead of 'superintendent,' it has been thought by us that it would appear more scriptural to adopt their term *'bishop.'*" The letter of Wesley is followed immediately by this: "Therefore, at this Conference, we formed ourselves into an independent Church; and, following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the Episcopal mode of government, we thought it best to become an Episcopal Church." John Wesley was named as a "bishop" of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It may not appeal to some that the name of the greatest Protestant family in this hemisphere, a family containing nearly one half the members of all Protestant Churches in this land, should have its roots in the fact of its origin; indeed, that the name should touch the venerable name of John Wesley himself. We confess it does carry weight with us. It speaks of so many things: of a time when

there was but one Methodist movement in this land, of the fact that with scarcely an exception the great bodies which compose the Methodist family in this hemisphere have in their names the words "Methodist Episcopal." It would seem that weighty reasons should be advanced before changing the name that links the Methodist movement with its beginnings and its founder. It would be ungrateful and it would seem unwise to take on a new name, as if Methodism were a creature only of to-day. There is a name that Methodism had when as yet in this land she was one and undivided. That, it would seem, is the proper standard of unity which should fly to the winds of heaven to-day and to-morrow until the end of time.

II

Another argument lies in the contention of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South—that she is as much a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church as is the denomination that bears that title. Says

McTyeire in his history: "The term [Methodist Episcopal Church] is used not as designating the original Church of that name, for such it is not, but the portion of the Church not included in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Each in its sphere is the 'Old Church.'"

The Cape May commissioners from both Churches, meeting in August, 1876, adopted without a dissenting voice a Declaration and Basis of Fraternity, as follows: "Status of the Methodist Episcopal Church and of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and their coordinate relations as legitimate branches of Methodism: each of said churches is a legitimate branch of Episcopal Methodism in the United States, having a common origin in the Methodist Episcopal Church organized in 1784." Pursuing that study, what sufficient reasoning can we advance why the common name dating from the common origin, should not be the name of united Methodism?

III

But may not the question be raised, Is

not the name suggested by the Joint Commission also inapplicable? That name is "the Methodist Episcopal Church *in America.*" This is not the original name. Is it not, moreover, a misnomer and will it not be an obstacle in days to come?

Consider: the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, know no such boundaries as *in America.* The lawmakers who in General Conference sit side by side, vote on all constitutional questions, elect the general superintendents and all the general officers of the denominations, come from the ends of the earth. "The world is our parish." The Methodist Episcopal Church has Annual Conferences in eastern and southern Asia, in South America, in Africa, and ten Annual Conferences or Missions in Europe. The northernmost town on the planet and likewise the southernmost, have each a Methodist Episcopal congregation. It is a universal Church, obedient to the command, "Go ye into *all the world.*" The sessions of a General Conference are the

most truly ecumenical gathering known. Whatsoever changes the future may disclose in the matter of representation, the Church should remain universal. Her general superintendents will at the same moment be bishops in New York and Peking and Petrograd. Inasmuch as the reorganization of Methodism does not contemplate cutting the roots which reach to China and South America and Africa and Europe, let not the process of reorganization tie a millstone to the neck of the foreign missionary enterprise, or, by its palpable influence, create a distrust in the breasts of brethren in Asiatic or European lands, that the Church is only an American Church, an Occidental Church, incapable of comprehending ethnic traits or aspirations, incapable of catholicity in sympathy and understanding. Is it not a species of Judaism to add the words "in America" to the historic name of Methodism? Let us have a name suggesting universality, the ability to comprehend ethnic traits and aspirations, the capacity to do our work with the largest sympathy and understanding.

CHAPTER XVI

A PLAN FOR ORGANIC UNION

SUMMARIZING now the findings of this series of studies, we may formulate them in a plan for the unification of Methodism. In order to make the conclusions of this book obvious we will print the Plan sent by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the plan arrived at in these studies, in parallel columns.

FOR THE UNIFICATION OF METHODISM

1. We suggest, as a plan of reorganization, the merging of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, into one Church, to be known as the Methodist Episcopal Church in America or the Methodist Church in America.

2. We suggest that this Church shall have

1. We suggest as a plan of reorganization, the merging of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, into one Church, to be known as the Methodist Episcopal Church.

2. We suggest that this Church shall have

throughout common Articles of Faith, common conditions of membership, a common hymnal, a common catechism, and a common ritual.

3. We suggest that the governing power of the reorganized Church shall be vested in one General Conference and three or four Quadrennial Conferences, both General and Quadrennial Conferences to exercise their powers under constitutional provisions and restrictions, the General Conference to have full legislative power over all matters distinctly connectional, and the Quadrennial Conferences to have full legislative power over distinctively local affairs. We suggest that the colored membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and such organizations of colored Methodists as may enter into agreement with them, may be constituted and reorganized as one of the Quadrennial or Jurisdictional Conferences of the proposed reorganization.

4. We suggest that the General Conference shall consist of two

throughout common Articles of Faith, common conditions of membership, a common hymnal, a common catechism, and a common ritual.

3. We suggest that the governing power of the reorganized Church shall be vested in a General Conference.

4. We suggest that the General Conference shall consist of two di-

houses, each house to be composed of equal numbers of ministerial and lay delegates. The delegates in the first house shall be apportioned equally among the Quadrennial Conferences and elected under equitable rules to be provided therefor The ministerial delegates in the second house shall be elected by the ministerial members in the Annual Conferences and the lay delegates by the laity within the Annual Conferences, under equitable rules to be provided therefor. Each Annual Conference shall have at least one ministerial and one lay delegate. The larger Conferences shall have one additional ministerial and one additional lay delegate for every —— ministerial members of the Conference; also an additional ministerial and lay delegates where there is an excess of two thirds of the fixed rate of representation. All legislation of the General Conference shall require the concurrent action of the two houses.

visions, each division to be composed of equal numbers of ministerial and lay delegates. The delegates in the *first division* shall be apportioned equally among the Supervisional Conferences and elected under equitable rules to be provided therefor. The ministerial delegates in the *second division* shall be elected by the ministerial members in the Annual Conferences, and the lay delegates by the laity within the Annual Conferences, under equitable rules to be provided therefor. Each *Annual Conference* shall have at least one ministerial and one lay delegate. The larger Conferences shall have one additional ministerial and one additional lay delegate for every —— ministerial members of the Conference, also an additional ministerial and lay delegate where there is an excess of two thirds of the fixed rate of representation. All legislation of the General Conference shall, if requested (by the same powers as now obtain in securing a Vote by Orders) require the concurrent ac-

5. We suggest that the Quadrennial Conferences shall be composed of an equal number of ministerial and lay delegates, to be chosen by the Annual Conferences within their several jurisdictions, according to an equitable plan to be provided for.

6. We suggest that the Quadrennial Conferences shall fix the boundaries of the Annual Conferences within their respective jurisdictions, and that the Annual Conferences shall be composed of all traveling preachers in full connection therewith and one lay representative from each pastoral charge.

7. We suggest that the Quadrennial Conferences shall name the bishops from their several jurisdictions, the same to be confirmed by the first house of the General Conference.

8. We suggest that neither the General Conference nor any of the Quadrennial Conferences be invested with final authority to interpret the constitutionality of its own actions.

tion of the two divisions.

5. We suggest that the Supervisional Conferences shall be composed of an equal number of ministerial and lay delegates, to be chosen by the Annual Conferences within their respective jurisdictions, according to an equitable plan to be provided for.

6. We suggest that the Supervisional Conferences shall fix the boundaries of the Annual Conferences within their respective jurisdictions, and that the Annual Conferences shall be composed of all traveling preachers in full connection therewith and one lay representative from each pastoral charge.

8. We suggest that the General Conference shall not be invested with final authority to interpret the constitutionality of its own actions.

"These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee . . . And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. . . . I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine: and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them. Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, even so send I them into the world. . . . Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that

the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me."

May this prayer of our only Lord and Saviour be answered in the sincere, full, and final union of American Methodism, that the world may see and seeing believe.

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